#### **NEW LOTUS**

Revealed – new Evora. Too little, too late?

#### **FUTURE GT-R**

Say hello to the Nissan GT-R off-road buggy

# RETURN OF THE ROAD RACER

Inside the spectacular **Aston Martin GT3** and **Porsche Cayman GT4** 





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# THE YEAR OF THE WHY NOW'S THE TIME TO BUY YOUR DREAM POCKET ROCKET N Town EJ64 URN **FEATURING** New Focus ST v rivals Best value hatches: Peugeot 208 GTi 30th v Ford Fiesta ST Who pays £20k for an '80s hatch icon? 1000 miles across Europe in the original Focus RS V64 VKE

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#### THE NEWSSTAND COVER OF THIS MONTH'S EVO

reads, 'Why now's the time to buy your dream pocket rocket'. There are a number of reasons for this, not least the overall competence and in some cases downright excellence of the cars in the current hot hatch market. Yes, the fast hatchback has truly come of age. So much so that a certain machine in this month's issue has had my wallet twitching like no other

new car since the BMW 1M. For a while, my 911 was in danger of being part-exchanged.

This, then, is a purple patch for the hot hatch. Fuel is cheaper than it has been for a long time in the UK and even the nuttiest hatches can yield 25mpg. With some smart finance you can also have most of the cars in our group test for around £250 a month. Add to this amazing practicality yet distinctive and – for the first time – mainly cohesive styling, and you have some seriously compelling cars.

This month's evo aims to summarise the hot hatch sector at this time. We make no apologies for placing the new Focus ST front and centre on the newsstand cover - the Fiesta ST is an utter gem and we have high hopes for its bigger brother. Then we have the Ford's obvious rivals (the Golf GTI and Astra VXR) and the class hooligan (Renaultsport's Mégane 275 Trophy). No hot hatch group test is complete without the fantastic SEAT Leon Cupra, and the Mini Cooper S - challenging looks aside - remains a sparkling entertainer. Many will be surprised that the Kia qualified for the group test, but **evo** has always championed the less obvious and, who knows, perhaps it can claim a scalp or two.

Also in this issue, you'll find a great piece from evo's subeditor Richard Lane. We sent him to Cologne in his original 2003 Focus RS for an audience with the new Focus RS. This latest fast Ford has a hell of a fight on its hands, as Henry and Stuart analyse with reports on the new Audi RS3 and Honda Civic Type R, respectively. The group test later this year will be epic. I wonder if a hot hatch will win the coveted evo Car of the Year title? I'd say so, if it wasn't for the Cayman GT4 (p11). This car, as Walter Röhrl told evo.co.uk editor Hunter Skipworth, is 'the perfect-handling car... a proper race car with a mid-mounted engine'.

I hope you enjoy the tweaked and bigger Radar section. Our aim is to bring even more depth to the main stories and improve the overall presentation. We've launched three

new pages: 'Ambition', which is a chat with a leading light in the performance car community; 'Engage', which is a page on interacting with the digital evo universe; and 'Tyres'. I think that last one speaks for itself! Feel free to email your thoughts to nickt@evo.co.uk.

evo has always strived to improve itself, and our recent ABC audit results prove the efforts aren't in vain. I'm pleased to report that evo is the only UK modern motoring magazine to post a year-on-year increase in print sales. Thank you, as ever, for your support.



**Nick Trott** Editor (@evoNickTrott)



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Photographic repro by Evo Magazine. Printed in the UK by BGP. Bicester, Oxfordshire OX26 4Q2 Printed in China by C&C Offset Printing Distributed by Seymour, 2nd Floor, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London ECIA 9PT Tel: 020 7429 4000. Fax: 020 7429 3625. Web: seymour.co.uk ISSN 1464-2786 USPS 024-183







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evo (USPS 024-183) is published monthly by Dennis Publishing Ltd, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD, United Kingdom. For subscriptions in the USA and Canada, visit www.imsnews.com, phone 1-800-428-3003, fax 1-757-428-6253, or email cs@imsnews.com. U.S. Agent Pitney Bowes International Mailing Services, 158 Mt Olivet Avenue, Newark 10714-2114. Periodicals postage is paid at Paterson NJ and additional mailing offices. US POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to Pitney Bowes International Mailing Services, 158 Mt Olivet Avenue, Newark NJ 07114-2114. Subscription recrords are maintained by Dennis Ublishing Ltd, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD, United Kingdom. Subscription prices: UK £47.99, Europe £58.20, Rest of World £88.40, USA \$115. All for 12 issues.



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**EVORA 400** 

GT3

FERRARI 488

**PROTOTYPE** 

**BABY NOBLE** 







Porsche Cayman GT4

BY JETHRO BOVINGDON

THE CAYMAN GT4 IS UNDER a crisp white cover when we arrive at a photographic studio just outside Stuttgart. We're here to meet it in the metal and speak to the head of GT cars at Porsche Motorsport, Andreas Preuninger. I can trace the familiar shape, but at the back the big shelf is new and, as the cover doesn't quite make it to the ground, the slender, graphite spokes of the wheels are peeping out and immediately say 'GT3'. I breathe a sigh of relief. Just seeing it under that cover is enough to make me believe that this is a fully realised GT project: the Cayman we've all been waiting to see and drive. Oh, and it's yellow. Porsche does yellow like nobody else.

I guess I should wait for the studio assistants to carefully unpeel the cover and reveal the GT4 in all its glory. But I can't. So while they chat with the PRs in the little kitchenette nearby, I just pull the cover back and gawp. I've had zero information about the GT4 prior to this moment other than the internet rumours. I still don't know what engine it has, the power output or weight. Sheet crumpled in a heap on the floor at the back of the car, I don't much care, either. Wow. I hurriedly compose a text to editor Trott. 'The GT4 is so, so cool.'

TURN PAGE FOR MORE INFO



SO THIS IS IT. THE GT4. THE hardcore Cayman – track-focused, developed by the team that has given us a long line of inspirational GT3 and RS models, the one we've all been dreaming about pretty much since the Cayman first arrived late in 2005. Sadly there'll be no driving today, but we'll get a deep dive into the tech, an audience with Preuninger and the chance to just spend a bit of time in its company. We'll learn the price, too. Just £64,451. You'll understand the 'just' when you see what's underneath the GT4's skin.

The things that grab you first? The wheels. Pure GT3. The wing. Pure motorsport. The stance. Just so much more serious-looking than even the

Cayman GTS. Then it's the subtle touches. The flared side air intakes with the little GT4 graphic. The absolutely gorgeous (and optional) carbonfibre seats, the even more gorgeous steering wheel (which is tiny – just 360mm in diameter compared with 380mm for the usual SportDesign wheel in Caymans and 991s), the bright yellow fabric pulls that replace the usual door release handles. It's just deliciously executed. And that's just the aesthetic stuff. Underneath, the attention to detail and specification is mouth-watering.

Power comes from a revised version of the 3.8-litre 9A1 flat-six, as found in the 991 Carrera S. With a new crankcase, intake system and

For now, the Cayman GT4 will be offered only with a six-speed manual gearbox



various other components to allow it to fit, power is 380bhp at 7400rpm and torque is 310lb ft from 4750 to 6000rpm. It revs to 7800rpm and we're promised that the power figures are on the conservative side. For now, the GT4 will be offered only with a six-speed manual gearbox.

The suspension components are either borrowed from the 991 GT3 (essentially the entire front end), or are completely bespoke. That means, at the front, the GT4 has inverted dampers and retains the PASM system found on the GT3. There are also forged aluminium split wishbones allowing shims to be used for more camber for trackday goers.

At the rear there's a whole new setup designed for stiffness and response. The dampers are height adjustable and feature helper springs.

Adjustable anti-roll bars appear front and rear. There's no GT3-like rear-wheel steering, but with the natural advantages of a mid-engined layout it was deemed unnecessary. Brakes are lifted from the GT3, and PCCB carbon ceramics are an option. Despite having a heavier engine, an extra radiator, and bigger wheels, tyres and brakes, the GT4 weighs 1340kg – 5kg less than a Cayman GTS. So it should stop just fine.

It goes pretty well, too. Porsche claims a top speed of 183mph and

0-62mph in 4.4sec. As revealed by Preuninger (overleaf), the GT4 was never supposed to be about 'the numbers', but even so it's going to be a serious trackday machine. The final Nürburgring lap time hasn't yet been set, but Porsche is confident it will record at most 7min 40sec.

Front tyre width is exactly the same as the GT3's – a 245-section – and the rear wheels are shod with a new and bespoke 295-section tyre. The six-speed 'box runs the same ratios as the GTS, which we've found to be overly long in the past, but Preuninger promises the 3.8-litre engine helps it pull them pretty well. There's also a mechanical limited-slip differential.

There's so much more, too, and from reprofiled door mirrors to revised wheelarch liners, the level of change is extraordinary.

Aerodynamic performance is a match for a 911 GT3, helped once again by the mid-engined layout that has allowed the rear underbody of the car to make the airflow work so much harder. The Cayman GT4 produces around 100kg of downforce at its top speed. But forget the 183mph potential and revel in a new Porsche that puts the driver right at the core of the experience. 'This is for customers who don't want to chase the last tenth,' says Preuninger. 'It's about emotion.' Amen to that.



#### BRAKES

The GT4 doesn't want for anything in the braking department. Standard kit is six-piston calipers with 380mm cast-iron discs front, four-piston with 340mm rear. PCCBs are optional.

#### ENGINE

The GT4's 3.8-litre flat-six comes from the 991 Carrera S, but has been reworked for the Cayman. Power is conservatively estimated at 380bhp, 14bhp down on the 911.

#### TYRES

Porsche Motorsport has worked with Michelin to produce a Pilot Sport Cup 2 to suit the GT4. The 245-section front tyre is the same size as the GT3's; the rear runs a bespoke 295-section.

#### OBODYWORK

Porsche Motorsport's take on the Cayman has resulted in a familiar Porsche GT look, with an aggressive front bumper with larger air intakes, larger side intakes and an adiustable rear wins.



#### **INTERIOR**

Drop into the carbonfibre-shelled seats and the GT4 instantly feels very special indeed. The Alcantara-trimmed steering wheel feels gorgeous, the fabric door-pulls that replace the usual handles are a knowing and grin-inducing nod to RS models, and the big spoiler sends a little spike of adrenalin down your back when you glance up into the rear-view mirror. The seats are optional (£1907) and there is also a Clubsport option (£2670) that includes a roll-cage; the rear section comes fitted but the front section will be delivered with the car for customers to have installed if they so choose.

You could, of course, go crazy with options on Porsche's configurator, but we'd keep it simple.

#### RIVAL



#### PORSCHE 996 GT3 RS

The GT4 is unique in the marketplace, unless you're prepared to think outside the box. With near identical power and weight figures (375bhp and 1330kg), a six-speed manual and similar trackday engineering, the 996 GT3 RS is a very close match. However, set against fast-appreciating RS models, the GT4 looks like an excellent bargain.

380<sub>bhp</sub>



The power increase the GT4 has over the Cayman GTS



The level of downforce produced at top speed (183mph)



#### THE BIG NUMBER

millimetres; as in the diameter of the optional PCCB carbon ceramic discs. 'I would say the GT4 is gently overengineered,' says Andreas Preuninger

#### **TECH CLOSE-UP**



#### Aerodynamics

The aim was to make the Cayman GT4 a zero-lift car. Because of its mid-engine configuration, the underbody aerodynamics are much easier to manage than on the 911, which has allowed Porsche's engineers to far exceed their targets.

#### Suspension

Forged aluminium wishbones; aluminium inverted dampers with ball bearing top mounts from the GT3; helper springs at the rear: adjustable antiroll bars with three settings; Normal and Sport settings for the PASM. The attention to detail is remarkable.



Steering

Porsche Motorsport has worked hard on the software tune of the electric power steering and has hinted that it's even better than the GT3's excellent setup.

The smaller, 918 Spyder-inspired steering wheel is 360mm in diameter (down from 380mm).



#### THE MAN IN CHARGE Andreas Preuninger

T'S A TOTALLY NEW approach on the Cayman platform - the first GT car. We are very proud and very excited about the project because this is something Cayman enthusiasts have been waiting for since day one. It's a pure [Porsche] Motorsport car. All the same people who made the GT3 were on this project as well. It's a little brother for the GT3 and has inherited a lot of good stuff from that car.

'It's got the 3.8-litre engine that's known from the Carrera S, so I would say, in a good way, that's old-school hot-rodding – put a bigger engine in the thing. It didn't fit at first - there's a different crankcase, a different intake and also a beefed-up gearbox from the Cayman GTS, which has a dualmass flywheel that's almost as light as a single-mass unit, plus Dynamic Engine Mounts. I guess we've created a whole new package and it works sensationally.

'It has 380bhp but that's GT horsepower, so it's at least 380bhp at an elevation of 10,000ft and in 40C heat... No, I'm kidding, but you know we are always conservative about our power figures. It's 380-ish I would say, and feels more. Combined with that mid-engined "stick-like-glue" handling, it makes you smile. We've just come back from the last tests in southern Italy and it was such a blast. I can't remember having such fun in a car for a long time. I envy everyone who's been able to get one!

'We have a manual transmission because there was a call for that from all over the world. Since the introduction of the 991 GT3 there are a lot of customers that want to shift want to get involved. They don't care too much about the last tenth. It's about emotion, it's about connection and having a car that talks to you. It all comes together in a beautifully balanced package.'

#### **KEY COMPONENTS**

The GT4's gorgeous 20-inch wheels are clearly inspired by the 991 GT3's, but instead of centre-locks, it's a five-lug design. The hubs are borrowed from the 991 Turbo so should be able to withstand all the abuse you could ever hurl at them. Tyres are Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2s, which we know are incredibly grippy but also progressive, and work much better in wet weather than previousgeneration Cup rubber. The GT4 should sneak under 7:40 at the Ring when the lap time is set in April.



#### SPECIFICATION

Basic price

Engine	Flat-six, 3800cc
Power	380bhp @ 7400rpm
Torque	310lb ft @ 4700- 6000rpm
0-62mph	4.4sec (claimed)
Top speed	183mph (claimed)
Weight	1340kg (288bhp/ton)

£64,451

# Lotus Evora takes on a hard edge

More power and revised aerodynamics for the new Evora 400 as Lotus takes another swing at Stuttgart

#### **1** AERO

The 400's nose design is all-new, with every element now having a clear function. The air vents are composite and headlight performance has been improved. Frontal drag is up, but aerodynamics have improved overall.

#### 2 CHASSIS

The wheels are manufactured by the same company that produces the wheels for McLaren's P1. Michelin replaces Pirelli as the tyre supplier. The brakes have four-piston calipers, with 370mm discs front, 350mm rear.

#### BODYWORK

Lotus has trimmed its colour options down from nearly 30 to just nine, and there will now be three interior trim options to choose from instead of five.

Given Lotus's modest volumes, this is down to supply chain economics

HIS IS THE FIRST substantially new Lotus to leave the Hethel production line under the stewardship of Jean-Marc Gales, the company's new chief executive officer. Called the Evora 400, it replaces the original 2+2 Evora that was first launched six years ago.

Following its debut at the Geneva show in March, the new Evora will complete its final testing programme before production starts in June and first deliveries begin on August 1.

This is no quick redesign to breathe new life into an old model, however. Under Gales' stewardship the Hethel team has worked around the clock for nine months to design a new body and develop an extruded aluminium chassis featuring lower and narrower sills, primarily to improve access to the cabin. There has also been an interior makeover addressing the quality and fit of materials.

The 400 is 40mm wider than the

original Evora inside and there's an extra 50mm of headroom. Lotus has also managed to increase the rear bench's width by 280mm thanks to improved packaging and redesigned seats. A switch from Recaro to Sparco has not only resulted in lighter yet less expensive front seats featuring new side airbags crucial for the car to be approved for US sales, but passengers in the back can now put their feet under them, too.

The new exterior, designed by Russell Carr – the man responsible for the original Evora – follows Lotus's philosophy of supercar performance and design. There's an entirely new front end and the rear is also fresh, except for the lights. Consequently, the Evora 400 has a wider and lower stance than before.

Despite sitting closer to the ground, one thing the Evora 400 does keep is the outgoing car's chassis, retaining the independent double



wishbone suspension all-round but with new spring rates. The new 19-inch front wheels and 20-inch rears wear 235/30 and 285/30 Michelin Pilot Super Sports respectively, Lotus having switched from Pirelli.

The Evora 400 sticks with Toyota's 3.5-litre supercharged V6, but revisions to the ECU, induction system and the 'charger itself have seen power increase to 400bhp (up from the Evora S's 345) and torque to 302lb ft (up from 295). The six-speed manual gearbox is retained and features a Quaife mechanical limited-slip diff as standard. An Aisin auto 'box will be available as an option.

When it arrives this summer, the Evora 400 will likely cost £9000 more than the outgoing £67,900 Evora S. It will be followed by a new Roadster version with a removable carbonfibre roof panel, while additional models are also planned, including a trackday-style Cup model.



# 400 hhn

Evora S 🔳 Evora 400



The new Evora's 400bhp power figure puts it in direct competition with the Porsche 911 Carrera S, with Lotus claiming its new 1415kg coupe will reach 60mph in 4.1sec and top 186mph - 0.5sec and 14mph improvements on the outgoing Evora S. The Porsche, for reference, registers a 0-62mph time of 4.5 seconds and hits a top speed of 188mph. The Carrera S costs £83,545.



#### STYLE



Carr and his team have increased the Evora's levels of downforce – the 400 develops 32kg at 150mph – but have kept the Evora S's overall efficiency. In the flesh, the new machine has gained an aggressive streak that was missing from the original. The design language is a hint of a new Lotus styling philosophy.



#### INTERIOR

The Evora's interior design hasn't changed greatly. However, what has improved is the quality of the materials used. The 400's leather is from a new supplier and there are new seats, new instrument graphics and improved ventilation and demisting systems.

#### THE BOSS

Jean-Marc Gales took over at Lotus nine months ago and the 400 is the first new model under his watch. 'It's lighter, more powerful, more grown up, but extreme, and it has better aero. It's a pure Lotus,' he says.





### RIVAL Porsche 911 Carrera S

Gales claims the Evora 400 offers Carrera S performance for Carrera money. That's a tough benchmark, but Lotus says it is confident

#### **SPEED**



sec quicker lapping Hethel than the old Evora S

#### SPECIFICATION

Engine V6, 3456cc, supercharged

Power 400bhp @ 7000rpm

Torque 302lb ft @ 3500rpm

0-60mph 4.1sec (claimed)

Top speed 186mph (claimed)

Basic price £76,900 (est)

Weight

1415kg (287bhp/ton)

# Aston Martin Vantage GT3

The fastest, most extreme Aston to have been developed at Gaydon since the One-77 is here



OW LONG HAVE WE wanted, and waited, to say this? Aston Martin has built a GT3 road car based on the Vantage platform. It's every bit as dramatic as we'd hoped, but crikey it comes at a cost, and there are some very strong rivals out there ready to take it on.

The GT3 is the car that Aston's engineers have always wanted to build, too – there hasn't been a raw, focused road-racer from Gaydon in recent years and yet the Vantage has been established (and winning) in a number of motorsport categories since 2006. Since then, Aston has built a further four versions of the Vantage race car – the GT4 (a slim-hipped V8 gentleman's racer), the GT2 (a lairy, wide-arched V8 monster), and the current GTE (V8) and 2013 British GT Championshipwinning GT3 (wide-body V12).

Aston Martin claims that the transition from track to road has

been relatively quick, citing the fact that it has only been involved in GT3 racing with the Vantage since 2012. However, **evo** understands that a number of engineers have wanted to create a hardcore version of a road car since the DBR9 won the GT1 class at Le Mans in 2007. It can't have been easy to watch rivals Ferrari, Porsche and Mercedes scoring significant brand points by launching road versions of their respective 458, GT3 and SLS racers in recent years.

Work on the road-going GT3 began 12 months ago, following Ulrich Bez's departure from the top job at Gaydon. The management team at the time developed the programme, and when new CEO Andy Palmer (a racing enthusiast) arrived from Nissan in October last year, he approved the project for manufacture.

The GT3 is lighter and more powerful than the V12 Vantage S – 100kg has been shaved from the



weight, with the GT3 weighing 1565kg. By comparison, a Porsche 991 GT3 (with half the number of cylinders) weighs 1430kg. Power from the V12 is up from 565bhp at 6750rpm to 592bhp at 7000rpm, while the Sportshift III clutchless manual 'box from the V12 Vantage S remains, albeit with quicker shifts.

The body is suitably extrovert. Wider, carbonfibre wings feature, as does a carbonfibre bonnet, an optional carbonfibre roof and optional polycarbonate rear windows. The rear wing is 1390mm across, and remarkably both it and the front splitter pass pedestrian safety regs.

Just 100 examples will be built, priced at £250,000. And if you think that's steep, many parts are optional (see above), meaning the most lightweight GT3 will cost closer to £300,000. Oh, and while Aston won't confirm it, wouldn't a Roadster version be great? Imagine the noise!

#### 🕦 DIFF & GEARBOX

Rear/mid-mounted, paddleshift-operated Sportshift III seven-speed automated manual gearbox, calibrated for quicker shifts. Limited-slip differential and a carbonfibre propshaft also feature.

#### 📵 BODY & CHASSIS

Familiar extruded bonded aluminium structure with magnesium alloy, composite and steel elements. Bodywork - except the doors – is made from carbonfibre A wider track results from different wheel offset.

#### WHEELS & TYRES

19-inch, seven-spoke forged alloys are standard. Centre-lock and magnesium wheels are an option. Fronts are 9.5in wide, rears 11in, Michelin Pilot Super Sport tyres. are 265-section (front), 325-section (rear).

#### **DOWNFORCE**



produces seven times more aerodynamic downforce than the V12 Vantage S road car, and twice the downforce of a Vantage GT4 race car.

#### WEIGHT

Key savings are from the carbon bodywork (30kg), a lithium-ion battery (18kg), the titanium exhaust (18kg), a magnesium rather than aluminium torque tube (7kg) and optional magnesium wheels (just 9kg per set, claims Aston). An additional 18kg is saved via lightweight seats, carbon door casings and manual



#### **AERODYNAMICS**



#### Underneath the warpaint lies Aston's most extreme aerodynamic package

The graphics do a good job of distracting you from the GT3's aerodynamic features, of which there are many. Engineered using knowledge from Aston's racing operations, the bodywork features a 1390mm-wide rear wing and a pronounced front splitter. From tip to tail, the latest Vantage is 145mm longer than a V12 Vantage. The track is wider too: 15mm at the front, 33mm at the rear.



#### 12 cylinders but no turbos...

The all-alloy, 48-valve, 5935cc V12 is pushed to nearly 600bhp. New features include magnesium inlet manifolds with revised geometry, plus a lightweight titanium exhaust. It's the most powerful Aston V12, bar the One-77's 7.3-litre unit.

#### INTERIOR

Highlights include exposed carbon seats and door casings, and magnesium paddleshifters. Satnav and DAB are standard, and a premium B&O sound system is an option. Alternatively, you could listen to that engine...





#### **SLS AMG BLACK series**

Same front-engine/RWD layout (albeit with a V8) and similar reliance on aerodynamics, but more power (622bhp), more torque (468lb ft), and a higher top speed (196mph). A true gem.

#### **POWER**

Impressed? A Ferrari F12 delivers 730bhp at 8250rpm...

SPECIFICATION Engine V12, 5935cc Power 592bhp @ 7000rpm Torque 461lb ft @ 5500rpm 0-60mph 3.5sec (claimed) Top speed 185mph (claimed) Weight 1565kg (384bhp/ton) £250,000 Basic price

NEWS FERRARI 488 GTB

#### RADAR



#### 1 ENGINE

The 488 GTB's new 3.9-litre twin-turbo V8 makes it the first blown mid-engined Ferrari road car since the F40. Peak power is 661bhp with peak torque at 560lb ft (190bhp and 134lb ft up on the F40, although the 488 is 260kg heavier).

#### CHASSIS

The 488 GTB is an evolution of the 458 Italia and its chassis retains much of its predecessor's assets. Work has concentrated on integrating Ferrari's updated side slip angle control system with the active dampers.

#### O AERO

Like many supercars, the 488 GTB's design is functional. There's a new active front spoiler and the active rear aero is linked to a blown spoiler that helps increase downforce by 50 per cent over the 458, without increasing drag.

# Ferrari 488 GTB

The era of naturally aspirated mid-engined
Ferraris is over, but wait until you see the
numbers attached to this new twin-turbo V8...

The 308 GTB, and so began a model line that has evolved to bring us some of the most wonderful Maranello-built road cars of all time. This latest, the 488 GTB, looks to continue the tradition and is the successor to the scintillating 458.

Making its debut at the Geneva motor show in March, the new mid-engined Ferrari will ditch its predecessor's naturally aspirated 4.5-litre V8 for an all-new 3.9-litre, twin-turbocharged V8. Its specification may look similar to the turbocharged powerplant found in the California, but Ferrari assures us that it's a suitably different motor. Incidentally, the car's model name comes from dividing the engine's cubic capacity by the number of cylinders, should you be wondering.

The switch to turbos will give Ferrari's new supercar a serious step up in performance. Its peak power output of 661bhp at 8000rpm is nearly 100bhp more than the outgoing 458 Italia's and 64bhp over a Speciale. Torque, meanwhile, swells from 398lb ft at 6000rpm to 560lb ft

at 3000rpm, although that figure is only realised when the revised seven-speed dual-clutch'box is in top gear.

In terms of performance, Ferrari claims 3.0sec to 62mph, 8.3sec to 124mph and a top speed of more than 205mph, all of which equal or better the Speciale. Naturally the new 488 GTB completes a lap of the company's Fiorano circuit quicker than **evo's** current Car of the Year, too, posting a 1min 23sec – five-tenths quicker than the Speciale.

The updated gearbox features Variable Torque Management, as found on the California T, which should result in an even spread of torque across the rev range rather than a vicious spike when the turbos have spooled up. The car's electronic aids have also been updated to help manage the increase in power and torque, while Ferrari has evolved its side slip angle control system (now SSC2) to facilitate greater corner exit speeds. New for SSC2 is integration with the active dampers (as well as the F1-Trac stability control system and the E-Diff, as before), resulting in an improvement in body control and







an increase in stability. SSC2 is also claimed to allow even greater slip angles before intervening. Many of the 488 GTB's new electronic systems have been developed off the back of Ferrari's XX programme.

Designed in-house at the Ferrari Styling Centre, the new car benefits from 50 per cent more downforce than the 458, as well as a reduction in drag. In order to achieve both goals, the design team focused on key areas, such as a new double front spoiler, which also offers improved thermal efficiency for the radiators positioned either side of the nose. The two central 'pylons' are combined with a deflector that channels air towards the flat floor, while active rear elements are coupled with a 'blown' spoiler. With the latter channelling air from the base of the glass engine cover and under the spoiler itself, the overall result is a 50 per cent increase in downforce over the 458 Italia. In order to position the diffuser at the optimum height, the exhaust tailpipes have also been repositioned.

Inside, the infotainment system has new graphics and controls, and the air vents and instrument panel have also been revised. The multifunction steering wheel remains, however, and the dashboard and centre tunnel are still two separate items, which is a customer favourite by all accounts.

Ferrari is yet to confirm a price, but expect an increase over the outgoing 458's. As with all previous mid-engined V8 Ferraris, we can also expect a gentle roll-out of derivatives, starting with a Spyder and followed by a replacement for the 458 Speciale and Speciale A. There is, too, the small matter of what happens when the 488 GTB lines up against McLaren's new 675 LT. We can't wait.



#### **SPECIFICATION**

Basic price

Engine	V8, 3902cc, twin- turbocharged
Power	661bhp @ 8000rpm
Torque	560lb ft @ 3000rpm
0-62mph	3.0sec (claimed)
Top speed	205mph+ (claimed)
Weight	1370kg (490bhp/ton)

£190,000 (est)

#### THE LAST GREAT V8?

Will we miss the normally aspirated Ferrari V8? Yes, undoubtedly. The first, in the 308, was reputedly a derivative of Ferrari's 1964 F1 engine, designed by Angelo Bellei, and although it had carbs and a measly displacement of 2927cc (de-bored to just 1991cc for the 208!) its basic architecture of 90 degrees in the V and a flat-plane crank would remain right up until the 458 Speciale. We know the new turbocharged V8 will still rev, but it's the naturally aspirated sound that I think we'll miss most. An F355 with a Capristo exhaust must produce one of the greatest noises known to man and my ears still ring with the mesmeric yowl of the Speciale we had in Scotland for eCoty last year. Henry Catchpole

#### **GT-R LM NISMO**

**NISSAN COULD TURN** everything we think we know about racing on its head by entering a front-wheel-drive race car at Le Mans this year.

The GT-R LM Nismo is powered by a front-mounted twin-turbo V6 and energy recovery system (ERS) that together produce around

1250bhp. To cope with this, the car features 14in-wide tyres at the front. The rears, however, are only 9in wide.

Ben Bowlby, Nissan's LMP1 team principal and designer of the DeltaWing race car, savs the car's weight bias and downforce centre of pressure have also moved forward



#### **SEAT LEON CUPRA ULTIMATE SUB8**

A NEW PERFORMANCE pack for the three-door SEAT Leon Cupra 280 promises Renaultsportrivalling Nürburgring lap times for a great deal less cash than a Mégane 275 Trophy-R.

Comprising 19in wheels, larger brakes with Brembo caliners and optional Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres from the regular Sub8 pack, the £4200 Ultimate option also sheds weight. Climate control, four speakers, the centre console armrest and rear air vents have all been sacrificed.

The 276bhp 2-litre turbo engine remains, however, as does a mechanical locking diff And it's all yours for £31,410.

## 949,000

That's how many MX-5s Mazda has sold worldwide since 1987. The new model arrives in the autumn.

# 3.1sec

Tesla's Model S P85D will hit 60mph quicker than a McLaren F1, following a recent software update.

Last time a Nissan GT-R won the Bathurst 12 Hours. Its R35-gen progeny has just achieved the same feat.

#### **NEW VAUXHALL CORSA VXR**

SET TO COMPETE with the Ford Fiesta ST and Peugeot 208 GTi, the latest Corsa VXR packs a turbocharged 1.6-litre four-pot boasting 202bhp and 206lb ft.

Vauxhall has beefed up the new Corsa's bodywork for its VXR transformation, with a styling kit that includes a large bumper vent and a downforce-generating rear spoiler. 18in wheels are optional.

Koni dampers, revised steering

settings and an optional Drexler limited-slip differential should ensure plenty of fun. The VXR makes its debut at the Geneva motor show.



# Peter Boutwood

Peter Boutwood has been at the helm of Leicestershirebased Noble Automotive for 15 years. Here he outlines his five ambitions for the company





Finish the M600 Speedster and get it on sale



Produce a smaller engine and a more affordable Noble



Within 15 years Noble needs to be making a more mainstream car



Within 20 years Noble should be standing on its own two feet



Noble should build on the respect it has in the car industry

FIRST AND MOST immediate ambition is to get the M600 Speedster finished and on sale. We're nearly there and it'll be the first time we've offered a paddleshift. It's a departure for Noble but in some markets, the Middle East for instance, a manual gearchange is culturally unacceptable.

'It will have auto mode and launch control, but it's a single-clutch Graziano 'box. I still wanted to keep a little bit of the rawness. Double-clutch is lovely but it isn't as exciting. This is more like an early racing car. With the launch control and paddleshift I think the M600 will go under three seconds to 60.

'Would we prefer to sell all manual cars? Yeah we would, actually. We could challenge certain hypercars as far as technology is concerned but, really, that's not our bag. What we're about is the reward for the driver and we want to keep that reward. It would be wrong of us to abandon what we set out to do that's our niche. But denying customers paddles? It's not for us to say. It will open up the M600 to customers who might be less confident with the manual car. That's good. I drive an automatic day-today. If I'm not out for a blast, I do find it a pain having to change gear all the time, especially in traffic.

'After that, I have some ideas. One of the problems with expanding markets is the different taxation laws they have. A lot of car companies now are doing less powerful engines to get around it. China, I think, levies about 150 per cent tax on our car. As you can imagine, that makes it quite expensive. So I'm looking at doing a car with a smaller engine, maybe an M500. It would probably have the same body with a few cosmetic changes. Same chassis, same approach - but maybe with just a little less power, 500bhp instead of 650.

'Going forward, I don't want Noble to be huge. Our ambition is not to make more and more cars. I would like to make 20 cars a year instead of ten, but I'd like to keep the quality as high. I would love to do an affordable supercar. The M12 was a very popular car but it was severely flawed in many ways. It wasn't really complete from an engineering standpoint. A great car but terrible to work on and unreliable. I'd love to be able to do a sub-£150k car for

### **66** I sell the car in every sense; I do the demos. Ron Dennis doesn't do that at McLaren >>

those people who love our cars. We have a huge fan base, but most people can't afford a quarter-of-a-million-pound car.

'There is, however, a possibility we could do something. What would we sacrifice? Well, obviously, we could sacrifice the M600's engine. It's an expensive piece. The chassis could stay. We'd have to sacrifice carbon. Once you've set up the moulds, the difference between carbon and glassfibre isn't vast. Thing is, people do great affordable sports cars already. And that's our problem. I think a lot depends on where regulations are heading, whether it will be illegal to not have ABS, airbags and so on. They're the things small manufacturers like Noble really can't do.

'I don't want to lose our ethos of doing drivers' cars. A lot of journalists have said the M600 is the nearest thing to an F40. We did test the M600 against an F40 and the Ferrari's turbo lag and poor build quality were obvious. But spiritually, the F40 is beautiful. There's something endearing and very tactile about it. It's an experience, and I think it's the same with an M600 - the fact that it's very analogue, but there's something about the spiritual side of it that people seem to "get".

'Ten years... To build on the respect we have within the industry. Because the M600 is so rare there's some misunderstanding out there. We're not a kit-car manufacturer. It's an inherited criticism from the previous cars. People considering the car usually ask us, "Will you be here in five years' time?" Yes. And of all the cars we've ever built, no one has sold one on. That's a record I'd like to continue. And so far, touch wood, there have been no accidents with the M600.

'Fifteen years... I'd like to see Noble as a properly established supercar company, possibly making a more mainstream car. A 911 rival? No, I don't think we could ever match the pricing. But very few people from our fan base can actually buy the car, so it is an

'Will I still be at the helm? If I don't die, yes. I don't want to sound arrogant but I think one of the great things about Noble is that it has a recognisable person at its head. I sell the car in every sense; I do the demos. Ron Dennis doesn't do that at McLaren. So, there is a face to the company, which I think is important. It's great to meet people, even if they're not going to buy an M600. And that's why I'd like to do the more affordable car.

'Twenty years... Well, I won't be here, will I? I'd be the oldest MD in the world, definitely the oldest test-driver. Hopefully, by the time it is time for me to go, unless something tragic happens. we will be established enough that Noble can stand on its own two feet. That's not to say it can't, but I think it would be difficult at the moment. You know what? I love the company, I love what we do.'

#### NOBLE BY NAME, NOBLE BY NATURE

In issue 186, **evo** compared the greatest 'analogue' supercars. The only current production car on the list? The Noble M600 We love that car

For a company producing lowvolume supercars that major on high levels of driver interaction, Noble is pretty much flying solo. However, the men and women at Leicester will be aware that Noble's point of difference is also its Achilles' heel - excuse the generalisation but most emerging markets love tech, automatics, and 'friendly' supercars.

However the harder Noble's rivals push modern tech and driver systems on customers, the starker its point of difference becomes. It's a fantastically honest and resolute approach that we hope transfers to a smaller car - and sooner rather than later. Nick Trott





Nissan Juke has been pushed to new limits with a series of new features. At its heart lies the incredibly responsive Direct Injection Turbo engine and NissanConnect, which places an array of navigation, social media and communication features at your fingertips.\* With a bold new look and colour personalisation options to play with, you'll really be able to express your inner thrill seeker.

Put yourself to the test with the British-built Nissan Juke and visit nissan.co.uk/newjuke

JAGUAR TECHNOLOGY BY DAN PROSSER RADAR

## Jaguar in 2015

With the new XE and major updates for the F-type just around the corner, Jaguar is set for a busy few months. We drive the prototypes





HEAD OF THE INTERNATIONAL press launch this spring, Jaguar invited journalists to drive XE prototypes in Portugal. The cars made up the first batch of XEs to roll off the production line, but some minor revisions will be made before customer deliveries begin, so we'll delay our full verdict until we've driven the finished model.

The XE's innovative Integral Link rear suspension layout gives the car a cushioned, pliant ride quality over the worst of Portugal's rural blacktop on both

the adaptive and passive suspension setups, but the car also feels agile and composed when hustled through corners. It's certainly closer in spirit to the dynamic benchmark for the class, the 3-series, rather than the more luxurious C-class.

The most powerful model at launch will be the 335bhp 3-litre supercharged V6 XE S. It's a lusty performer, but the blown V6 isn't quite the powerhouse one might imagine it to be. Apparently Jaguar's monstrous supercharged V8 does fit...

#### F-TYPE MYI6

ALONGSIDE A MORE intuitive infotainment system, the F-type now has electric power steering and is available with four-wheel drive and a manual 'box - although not in tandem.

The car still responds quickly to steering inputs just off centre and the new EPAS system is crisp, but some of the detail of the old hydraulic setup has been lost.

The four-wheel-drive system, however, is an unqualified success. In normal circumstances 100 per cent of torque is sent to the rear axle, but when the car detects slip it can

divert as much as 70 per cent to the front The result is that the car feels very much like the rear-wheel-drive model for the most part, even stepping out of line both on turn-in and under power, but rather than holding gratuitous powerslides the system simply fires the car up the next straight. It's more useable in the wet and less of a handful at the limit, while still being fun and engaging.

The six-speed manual 'box is a welcome addition, although the shift quality, while slick and light, feels more befitting of a saloon.



**RUSS VARNEY** Vehicle programme director, F-type

#### Why does Jaguar need a four-wheeldrive F-type?

The segment is all about the Porsche 911. It's a good business model - launch a new car, then keep on offering the customer something more throughout the life cycle. We're doing the same thing.

Most people sign up to a three-year lease deal, but the data

shows they'll change their car after 27 months.

What we're endeavouring to do is not only capture new customers in parts of Europe and North America [who need allwheel drive because of the local climatel. but also to capture the repeat customers who are coming off leases. We're offering them something new to try.

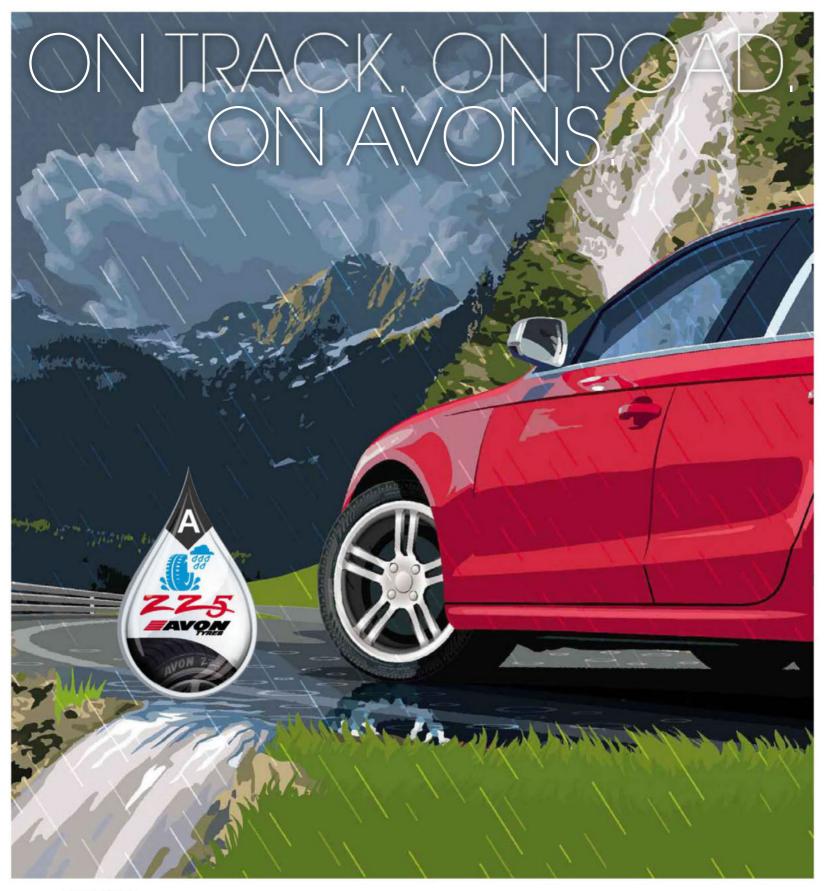
#### How does the fourwheel-drive car behave at the limit?

Once you start oversteering and you put some counter steer in, if you hold a steady throttle it will keep the balance of the car so it will remain a bit oversteery, but still in control. If you lift off, the torque vectoring by braking system will look after the yaw of

the car [and straighten it up]. If you just floor it, which is a bit counter-intuitive, the systems will hold the attitude of the car, but it will send some more torque to the front wheels so you get better acceleration

#### What take-up are you expecting for the manual option?

Part of my job is to make a business case for everything, and the case for the manual is configured around a small take-up. With all these things it's a bit of a crystal-ball game. We weren't expecting to get the level of V8 uptake that we've had for instance The manual has to make financial sense - I can't just choose to do something for the hell of it, although it'd be very nice to do that!





Avon Tyres have a winning line up of high performance and ultra high performance car tyres designed and developed to meet the demands of motoring today. Whether you are driving through city streets, cruising the autobahn or competing on the race track, rediscover the thrilling experience of motoring in its finest form. Our flagship ultra-high performance tyre, the acclaimed ZZ5, now features an A-grade for wet grip, the highest rating awarded under EU regulations, across all sizes in the range. Avon. The great British tyre that's taking on the world. www.avon-tyres.co.uk





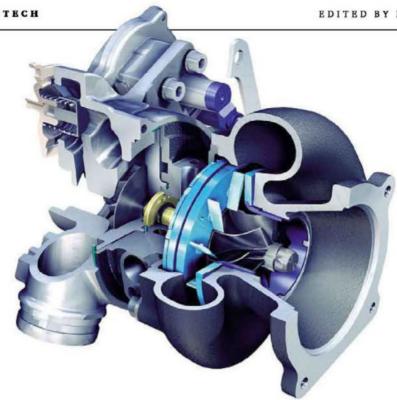
#### TURBO LAG – AND HOW TO AVOID IT

E ARE STARTING TO see many manufacturers downsizing and turbo-charging their power units. BMW, for example, now has a three-cylinder turbo engine in some Minis and even in the i8. This trend is due to emissions regulations, to which car makers are responding by chasing efficiency through downsizing, then making up for lost performance through turbocharging.

Although turbocharging forces more air into the engine per cycle at high revs (making a bigger explosion possible, therefore creating more power), there is a downside: turbo lag. Turbos are driven by the flow of exhaust gases from the engine interacting with the turbine blades in the turbo housing. Therefore, turbo boost pressure is intrinsically linked to exhaust gas flow rate.

When the engine is at full chat, you experience no lag in boost pressure, because lots of exhaust gas is flowing into the turbine, creating boost pressure on the compressor side of the turbo. However, when the car is at the lower end of the rev range, where gas flow rates are lower, turbo lag will mean that the equivalent naturally aspirated car will leave you at the lights while you wait for your turbo to spool.

So what solutions are available to reduce the effects of lag?



#### TWIN TURBOS (SEQUENTIAL)

Halving the turbocharger size and having two of them means that one can spool quicker for the low rpm range due to its lower inertia, then when exhaust flow rates increase, the second turbo is activated.

#### **VARIABLE GEOMETRY TURBO**

VGT can 'close' the vanes (the bright blue blades in the image here) that surround the turbine blades to make the best use of low-rpm gas flow. They can then 'open' the vanes so that higher flow rates don't send too much boost to the engine at high revs.

#### TWIN-SCROLL TURBO

These are single turbocharger units that have two inlets. The first is designed for low gas flow rates, maximising pressure on the turbine blades. The second inlet is larger, creating a lower pressure on the turbine for higher gas flow rates.

#### **HYBRID TURBO**

These are what we now find on the current Formula 1 fleet. Using a motor generator unit sandwiched between the turbine and compressor sides of the turbo, the turbo shaft can spin up under electrical load at low revs, virtually ridding us of the dreaded 'transient response delay'. Researchers at Mitsubishi in 2006 showed that their hybrid turbo setup reduced lag by 70 per cent. When such technology transfers to road cars, even the most die-hard high-capacity purist should have little to fear from downsizing.



#### ASK MIKE: YOUR TECH QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Should I change my brake fluid if using my car on track?

Your car's brakes will take a hammering on a trackday, and the high temperatures from the disc-to-pad friction will find their way into the brake fluid – you can even boil it. Replacing your brake fluid after each trackday will ensure its hydraulic properties are not compromised.

DOT 5.1 brake fluid has a high temperature rating, and even though it has the same boiling point as DOT 5 (around 260C), DOT 5.1 deals with water in the system better.

Send your question to experts@evo.co.uk

Technology game changers:

#### ANTI-LOCK BRAKES

Invented by: Gabriel Voisin When:

1929

Before ABS, if you slammed on the anchors in your car, the front wheels could lock up. When locked, the mechanical grip between the tyre and the road surface is compromised, so it takes longer to stop than if you were braking hard with no wheel lock, and the

front wheels have little to no effect on direction change.

Back in the day, cadence braking was used to mitigate locking brakes. The technique involves pumping the brake pedal to briefly unlock the wheels and regain grip, thus reducing the stopping distance



on slippery surfaces and providing some steering control.

Originally developed for aircraft use way back in the 1920s,

ABS was first used in mass automotive applications in the 1970s and essentially automates cadence braking. A basic system uses a toothed ring connected to the rotating hub at each wheel, with speed sensors mounted statically to monitor the teeth as they pass.

If the ECU senses that a wheel is rotating at a lower speed than the others or is locked altogether, hydraulic valves in the brake fluid lines close and release braking pressure. A modern system can modulate brake pressure at rates of around 15 cycles per second.





# THE ABARTH 500 BI-COLORE: YOU'LL HAVE TO BE QUICK TO GET YOURS



FOR ANYONE WHO WANTS SOMETHING SPECIAL, THERE'S ABARTH. AND FOR ANYONE WHO WANTS SOMETHING EXTRA SPECIAL, THERE'S THE ABARTH BI-COLORE. A RUN OF JUST 50 CARS FEATURING A UNIQUE TWO TONE PAINT FINISH AND A HOST OF OTHER SPECIFICATION UPGRADES.

THE ABARTH 500 CUSTOM WITH EXCLUSIVE 'BI-COLORE' PACK.YOURS FOR JUST £15,990' OTR WHICH INCLUDES:

UNIQUE SCORPIONE BLACK OVER RECORD GREY PAINT

**REAR PRIVACY GLASS** 

17' 10 SPOKE DIAMOND FINISH ALLOY WHEELS

ABARTH SPORTS SEATS WITH NATURAL LEATHER TRIM

**ENVIOUS GLANCES** 

#### FIND OUT MORE AT ABARTHCARS.CO.UK

Model shown is the New Abarth 500 1.4 TB T-jet 135 BHP, with exclusive 'Bi-Colore' pack at £15,990 OTR. The 'Bi-Colore' pack is only available on selected stock vehicles and is subject to availability. Range of official fuel consumption figures for the Abarth 500 range: Urban 33.2 - 37.2 mpg (8.5 - 7.6 1/100km); Extra Urban 52.3 - 60.1 mpg (5.4 -4.7 1/100km); Combined 43.5 - 48.7 (6.5 - 5.8 1/100km). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 155 - 134 g/km. Fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EC directives/regulations and may not be representative of real-life driving conditions. Factors such as driving style, weather and road conditions may also have a significant effect on fuel consumption.

TYRES EDITED BY SAM SHEEHAN



irelli's attempts to elevate the effectiveness of its tyres with the help of complex electronics are advancing apace, the firm's technology chief, Maurizio Boiocchi, tells evo.

'We're continuously working on the P Zero family of products, specifically to have electronics working inside the tyre, interacting with the main computer in the car – something more than a tyre pressure monitoring system,' he says.

Boiocchi is referring to Pirelli's Cyber Tyre technology, which employs four 50 pence piece sized sensors embedded into each quadrant of the tyre belt. The LaFerrari-based FXX K track special is now acting as a test bed for the initiative, the benefits of which will reach mass produced supercars within five years.

'The sensors can read what the friction coefficient is and what forces are acting on the tyre's footprint, then offer real-time feedback, talking to the car's ECU. The ECU then helps manage whatever active presence there is on the car, be it active suspension, camber, torque; whatever you like in order to improve extreme performance,' explains Boiocchi.

Working in tandem with stability systems, the upshot is that a car with

active suspension will be able to instantaneously and independently alter the camber of its wheels during cornering to continuously maximise grip. Likewise, if a front tyre preempts understeer, it can send a message commanding the ECU to soften the car's suspension.

Implications for braking are perhaps more striking still. 'Instead of ABS acting on information from the first part of braking, you have the real force that's actually available to exploit,' Boiocchi says. 'There's a lot of potential for improved safety or performance.'

**Richard Lane** 

### GOODYEAR TURNS RICE INTO TYRES

RICE HUSK ASH, TO BE SPECIFIC

Goodyear is boosting its green credentials by switching its source of silica to rice husk ash, a waste product of rice milling.

Silicon dioxide – silica for short – is a porous compound that has featured in performance tyres for more than a decade. Manufacturers claim that it can help to reduce rolling resistance by as much as 20 per cent and that it also helps to improve tyre integrity. Silica currently make up 15 per cent of each tyre Goodyear makes.

'We use silica in our high-

performance tyres to improve two main areas – fuel economy, by reducing rolling resistance, and grip on wet road surfaces,' explains Surendra Chawla, Goodyear's director of corporate research.

Rice husk is one of the most silicarich raw materials on the planet and there's plenty of it. Seven hundred million tons of rice are harvested worldwide each year, and often the leftover husk is burned for energy and then crammed into a landfill.

Goodyear has been working on the idea of using husk ash for more than two years, but has only now decided that the practice is ready. However, implementation won't immediately save the company money.

'Using rice husk is no cheaper than

conventional methods. In fact, it's a little bit more expensive at the moment, but we're currently working hard to keep costs down so prices don't grow for the consumer,' says Chawla. Long-term, production costs should begin to fall.

All of Goodyear's performance tyres, including the Eagle F1
Asymmetric, will benefit from this development from April. Could rice husk silica help the Eagle F1 improve on its third-place ranking in our recent tyre test (evo 201)? Chawla is confident it won't hurt its chances.

'The best thing is that the driver won't notice any difference to tyre feel, it doesn't compromise anything,' he says.

Sam Sheehan

#### TYRE TECH: STUDDED TYRES

Take a winter trip to the near-Arctic town of Arjeplog in the Lapland region of Sweden, and you'll notice something unusual about the town's traffic.

While the roads are covered with snow and ice, vehicles move about with little more effort and no less control than they would on dry roads. Cars brake normally and pull away from junctions without issue.

The reason is that citizens of Arjeplog use studded winter tyres during the colder months, and the effect of these studs, screwed into the tread blocks, cannot be understated.

Outright grip on studs is of course lower than for regular tyres on dry tarmac, but they raise limits far higher than even regular snow tyres can.

If one drives smoothly, it's entirely possible to navigate the roads as you might driving similarly on tarmac. The studs break through ice and find purchase where snow tyres cannot. A dedicated tread pattern maintains grip on softer surfaces the rest of the time.

They aren't ideal in other conditions – on streets not covered with ice, the studs can damage the road surface. They're illegal as a result in some European countries, but in the northern Scandinavian territories they're essential for keeping people moving – and helping them stop.

Antony Ingram





Everything has changed. And nothing. Despite world leading innovations rendering the 2015 Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint almost unrecognizable to the engineers and designers of the 1954 original, one thing remains. The spirit that lives in every Alfa Romeo. Unchanging. Unmistakable. Unmatched. Now available with 0% APR Representative and from just £239 per month.



THE NEW GIULIETTA Sprint



SEARCH 'ALFA ROMEO PROMOTIONS

Model shown is the Giulietta 1.4 MultiAir 150 bhp Sprint at £21,000 OTR including Alfa Red paint at £510. Range of official fuel consumption figures for the Alfa Giulietta range: Urban 28.8 – 56.5 mpg (9.8 – 5.0 I/100km); Extra Urban 53.3 – 83.1 mpg (5.3 – 3.4 I/100km); Combined 40.4 – 70.6 mpg (7.0 – 4.0 I/100km). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 162 – 104 g/km. Fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EC directives/regulations and may not be representative of real-life driving conditions. Factors such as driving style, weather and road conditions may also have a significant effect on fuel consumption.

\*£2,219 customer deposit, £6,798 optional final payment, 48 month contract. Promotion available on new Giulietta 1.4 MultiAir Sprint models registered by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. Only available in conjunction with Alfa Romeo Preferenza PCP. With Alfa Romeo Preferenza you have the option to return the vehicle and not pay the final payment, subject to the vehicle not having exceeded an agreed annual mileage (a charge of 6p per mile for exceeding 6,000 miles per annum in this example) and being in good condition. Finance subject to status. Guarantees may be required. Terms and Conditions apply. At participating Dealers only. Alfa Romeo Financial Services, PO BOX 4465, Slough, SL1 ORW. \*On the road price includes 12 months' road fund licence, first vehicle registration fee, delivery, number plates and VAT. Figures and prices are correct at time of publishing. Retail sales only. Terms & Conditions apply & are subject to exclusions.

#### THE LUXURY OF ONE TYRE FOR FOUR SEASONS



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S INTRODUCTIONS TO the World Rally Championship season go, Rallye Monte Carlo is a baptism of fire. Well, the opposite, really. During its January slot in the WRC calendar, the alpine roads can offer up everything from dusty tarmac to sheet ice and thick snow. Tyre choice can be a lottery and even the greatest drivers in the world can be caught out by ever-changing conditions.

From Mini's first victory in 1964 at the hands of Paddy Hopkirk, to 2014's Volkswagen Polo victory, Monte Carlo has long favoured shorter, nimbler vehicles. Each car featured in model form here has taken victory at the famous event.

All models from racing models.com

#### MORRIS MINI COOPER S (1:18)

Aaltonen-Liddon, 1967 (Kysoho) £80

#### 0

#### CITROËN XSARA WRC (1:18)

Loeb-Elena, 2005 (Sunstar) £37.50

#### TOYOTA CELICA (1:43)

Sainz-Moya, 1991 (Ixo) £34

#### 3

#### AUDI QUATTRO (1:43)

Röhrl-Geistdörfer, 1984 (UH) £40

#### LANCIA STRATOS HF (1:43)

Munari-Maiga, 1976 (Ixo) £15

#### 6

#### RENAULT 5 TURBO (1:18)

Ragnotti-Andrie, 1981 (UH) £44

#### 7

#### PORSCHE 911 S (1:43)

Waldegård-Helmer, 1970 (Schuco) £40

#### 8

#### VOLKSWAGEN POLO WRC (1:43)

Ogi**er-Ingrassia, 2014** (Volkswagen) £45

I couldn't live without...

#### BRDC GOLD STAR

Andy Wallace Winner, 1988 24 Hours of Le Mans 'One thing I genuinely couldn't live without is a weekly blast in a twelve-hundred horsepower Veyron [Wallace gives prospective owners test drives, since you ask]. It's just something that keeps you alive, isn't it?

'But the item I've chosen is my BRDC Gold Star, which was awarded to me in 1990. There's a Silver Star for national races and a Gold Star for international races. I won it after victory at Daytona, finishing third in Sebring and

second in Le Mans in the same year.

'Normally if you do really well at Daytona or Sebring, you don't do very well at Le Mans, so a podium in each one was great. Of course I could live without it, but it just looks really cool!'



### FORZA HORIZON 2

£44.99 store.xbox.com

PORZA HORIZON 2's unique selling point runs something like the introduction to an evo Car of the Year test. You're given a swathe of southern Europe to explore – areas such as the Côte d'Azur and Tuscany – and hundreds of fast cars in which to negotiate the region's curves and villages.

The stunning scenery plays out in glorious detail through *Horizon 2*'s high-fidelity graphics. Cars hold up to all but the closest scrutiny, with reflections, vibrant paint shades and environmental effects like rain and dust modelled with incredible detail. The sounds are great too, making every prod of the 'accelerator' a joy.

You start at the bottom, of course. Your character has travelled to Europe to take part in the Horizon Festival, and naturally one must buy an affordable vehicle and work through predictable series – hot hatchbacks, 1990s cars – to earn enough to progress. Money and experience is awarded for high race positions, stunts, scenery destruction and more, and new cars and locales are opened up with each series victory.

It's here that some of *Horizon 2*'s less favourable points begin to surface. Car handling is accurate enough and varies from model to model, but even small, lightweight vehicles can feel lumbering thanks to slow joypad responses. The result is that with just the Xbox One's tiny



analogue stick for steering, slides and fishtailing can be difficult to control.

Frustrating too are the races themselves. Revved up after purchasing a Ferrari F40 or a beautiful Alfa TZ2 (pictured below), you'll scratch your head in confusion as to why you're being asked to compete on dirt roads and traverse vineyards. Difficulty levels of the aggressive 'Drivatar' virtual competitors and vehicle driving aids can be varied, but sometimes a lost race is fundamentally down to the game's mismatch of cars and courses - no matter how much you abuse the have-another-go 'rewind' feature to correct misjudged moments.

One way to improve your chances is to eschew the game's vast library of modification parts. Giving your car more power does little but make it more difficult to control. Competitors are matched to your car anyway, so tuning doesn't yield an advantage.

The exception to the above is if

you've paid £15.99 extra for the *Storm Island* expansion pack. Among the extra vehicles and roads is access to parts such as special tyres and raised suspension. It's probably the most fun you'll have in *Horizon 2*, throwing away the pretension of realism and concentrating solely on scenery-blurring speed.

Forza Horizon 2 looks fabulous, is great fun in parts, and collecting and modifying the game's vehicles can be a real joy. It's just a pity that the physics aren't a little less punishing – in a title where points are scored as you smash into telegraph poles, fences and other road users, a little more arcade-style accessibility wouldn't be out of place.





#### WATCH

#### Meaden drives the R8 LMS Ultra

Search 'Meaden R8 LMS' at YouTube.com

If you enjoyed Richard Meaden's story on the Nürburgring 24 Hours-winning Audi R8 LMS Ultra in issue 201, don't miss the accompanying video on the **evo** YouTube channel. Driving at Italy's Misano World Circuit, Meaden remarks on just how similar the race car feels to a road-going R8. As he ran our R8 V10 Plus long-termer, he's perfectly placed to know...

#### ALTERNATIVE OPEN-WORLD BACERS



#### Grand Theft Auto V

Racing, crashing and stunning scenery all feature in GTA V too, but so do theft, flamethrowers and banned substances. It's not really a racing game as such, but find a good online lobby and the competition can be just as fun.

#### THE CLEM

#### **The Crew**

Taking open-world to new extremes, *The Crew* puts a shrunken US at your fingertips. Driving coast to coast takes 45 minutes, making this map huge by video-game standards. A cheesy story marks it down next to the polished *Forza Horizon* games.



#### Driver

If you don't mind
'90s graphics, Driver
was one of the first
open-world driving
games and remains
one of the most
fun. It's simplistic
in the extreme by
modern standards,
but executing a huge
slide is immensely
satisfying and the '70s
soundtrack is spot-on.

# 0% APR.\* ZERO DEPOSIT.



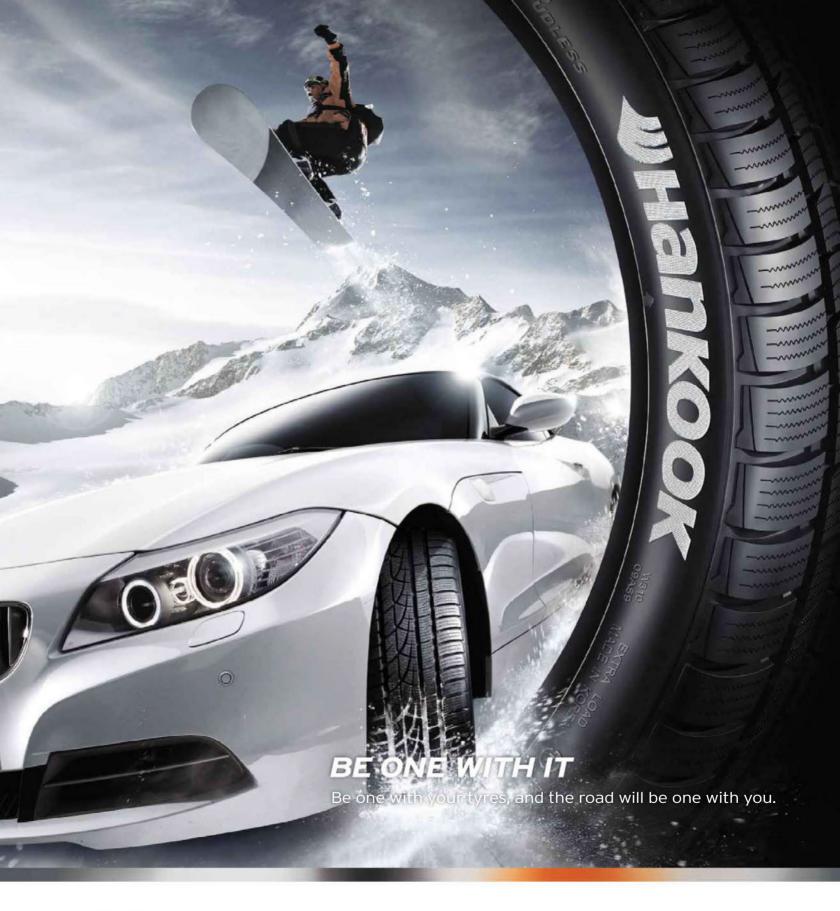


Offer now includes £500 Mazda Deposit Contribution and is available on Mazda Personal Contract Purchase. For more information or to book a test drive, search Mazda3. DEFY CONVENTION.

Mekpe

The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (I/100km) for the Mazda3 range: Urban 37.7 (7.5) - 60.1 (4.7), Extra Urban 58.9 (4.8) - 80.7 (3.5), Combined 48.7 (5.8) - 72.4 (3.9).  $CO_2$  emissions (g/km) 135 - 104.

The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results obtained through laboratory testing, are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience. Retail sales only, subject to vehicle availability for vehicles registered between 01.01.15 and 31.03.15 at participating dealers. T&C apply. \*0% APR finance available on all Mazda3 models over 24, 30, 36 or 42 months. You will not own the vehicle until all payments are made. Finance subject to status, 18s or over. Guarantee/Indemnity may be required. Mazda Financial Services RH1 1SR. Model shown: Mazda3 120ps Sport Nav, OTR from £20,195. Model shown features optional Soul Red Metallic paint (£660). OTR price includes VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months' road fund licence, first registration fee, 3 year or 60,000 mile warranty and 3 years' European roadside assistance. Test drives subject to applicant status and availability. Details correct at time of going to print. Not available in conjunction with any other offer unless specified.





#### Winter i\*cept evo

**Stay confident in snowy conditions**Our patented polar bear claw groove provides superior driving performance even in the most extreme winter situations.



#### RADAR

#### **WATCH TECH**

Montblanc **Urban Speed** e-Strap



Traditional watch makers seem largely unconcerned by the rise of the smartwatch, but Montblanc has stepped forward as the first luxury brand to combine wearable technology with classic horology by introducing its 'Urban Speed e-Strap'.

Fitted to a range of conventional, clockwork Montblanc TimeWalker watches, the e-Strap is described as an 'integrated technology device'. It connects to selected smartphones via Bluetooth and offers an activity tracker, notifications, remote controls and 'Find-Me' functions (more below).

Alerts about texts and emails are delivered via a vibration, while the stran's touchscreen can be used to preview mail. read texts, see incoming calls and monitor social media feeds. It also allows the wearer to remotely control the phone, to take a picture or play, pause or skip music, for example.

Perhaps the most useful aspect of the e-Strap however is that it can locate a lost phone at a distance of up to 30 metres - and it also works the other way around if you misplace the watch.



#### THIS MONTH

#### **Louis Moinet Nelson Piquet**

#### Price: CHF 9900 (c£7100) From: louismoinet.com

UK readers may not be familiar with the Louis Moinet name, as the brand is not currently sold here, but it's an interesting and historic one: Moinet, a French horologist, is credited with inventing the chronograph in 1816. This beautifully crafted tribute to Nelson Piguet features a facsimile of the triple F1 champion's signature on the dial and is finished in 'Brabham' blue and white. The push pieces get chequered flag detailing and the back of the watch is engraved with the years of Piquet's victories. Just 365 will be made.

#### **Davosa Vintage** Rallye Pilot

#### From: classic-time.co.uk Price: £1395

Independent Swiss brand Davosa makes some great quality watches at competitive prices - not least this retro-look Vintage Rallye Pilot. Its steel case measures a sensible 42mm, while inside you'll find a trusty Valjoux 7750 self-winding movement. Automotive touches include the perforated leather strap and central tachymeter scale on three concentric rings. The outer telemeter scale, incidentally, is a device usually used for calculating the distance of artillery fire, so could be useful if driving through a war zone.

#### **IWC Ingenieur Chronograph Edition Nico Rosberg**

#### From: IWC boutique, London Price: £10.350

Like his team-mate Lewis Hamilton (evo 204), Nico Rosberg was invited to suggest a few design tweaks to the standard Ingenieur chronograph. And the result was this - a special edition of 250 examples. The watch features a titanium case, a silver-plated dial, and yellow hand detailing said to have been inspired by the driver's once-trademark neon crash helmet. The crown, crown guard and bezel screws are made from zirconium oxide, while the case back is embedded with carbonfibre and engraved with Rosberg's name.

#### **CHRONO**



Read more from Simon de Burton in Chrono, the interactive watch magazine for iPad and iPhone, available now from the iTunes Store.

#### NOW & THEN

Zenith El Primero Lightweight

#### Worn by: Stéphane Peterhansel

The Dakar rally king – he's won a record six times on motorcycles and five in cars - is the latest ambassador for Zenith and wears an El Primero Lightweight.

#### Enicar Sherpa Graph

Worn by: Jim Clark We've mentioned the late, great Jim Clark's sponsorship by Galet (evo 187), but he also put his name behind the Swiss brand Enicar, notably wearing one of its watches at the 1967





Official fuel consumption for the Volvo V40 T2 R-Design (manual) in MPG (I/100km): Urban 41.5 (6.8), Extra Urban 62.8 (4.5), Combined 53,3 (5,3), CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions sales only. \*Subject to availability at participating dealers only on vehicles registered by 31st March 2015. At the end of the agreement there are 3 options: (i) Renew: Part exchange the vehicle. (ii) Retain: Pay the Optional be required. Volvo Car Credit RH1 1SR. You will not own the vehicle until all payments are made. The service offer is only applicable when purchasing on Volvo Advantage Personal Contract Purchase on vehicles ordered



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Duration of agreement (mon	ths) 49
Fixed rate of interest p.a.	3.55%
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Excess mileage charge 14	1.9p per mile

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124g/km. MPG figures are obtained from laboratory testing intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect real driving results. Finance subject to status. Retail Final Payment to own the vehicle or (III) Return the vehicle. Further charges may be made subject to the condition or mileage of the vehicle. Terms and conditions apply. Applicants must be 18 or over. Guarantee/Indemnity may between 1st January 2015 and 31st March 2015. Services must be carried out at a Volvo Authorised Repairer. Retail offer only. Excludes fleet operators and business users. See volvocars.co.uk for full terms and conditions.



Isn't it about time Lotus gave us an entirely new two-seater sports car?
Not when the current recipe works a treat...

**Photography:** Dean Smith

T

THE PACKET USED to be kept in the blue cupboard in the corner of the kitchen.

Between some mints and an empty jam jar labelled 'gooseberry' that never seemed to move. I remember it was quite a stretch to reach when I was an ankle-biter, but it was worth the effort. The reward was a funsize Mars bar: the perfect end to any childhood meal.

I had one again the other day. At least a decade must have passed since I'd last unwrapped the slightly waxy paper and let one of the miniature chocolate-nougat-caramel blocks melt in my mouth, but in that single moment all the memories came flooding back and I felt like I was about six years old again. The funsize definitely taste better than the full size too. How did I let familiarity breed such contempt

and fail to revisit them for so long?

A few weeks later, skimming down the road in the bare, bonded aluminium tub of an Elise for the first time in a couple of years, I experienced something similar to the mini Mars bar moment. The Elise has been around now for the best part of 20 years (yes, really), and if we're honest it hasn't changed a great deal in those two decades. As a result it's easy to let 'new'



iterations pass you by. But then you drive one again. Instantly the pedals fall effortlessly beneath your feet, the high cheekbones of the front arches frame your view through the windscreen and the whole car fizzes with feedback, despite the tyres touching the tarmac so lightly. It just feels right.

The S Cup is the road-going version of the S Cup R race car. It has the 217bhp, 184lb ft supercharged

1.8-litre four-cylinder engine from the Elise S, the sport suspension from the Club Racer and then the Cup R's single rear exhaust and aero package, comprising front splitter, winglets, barge boards, rear wing and diffuser. Arguably it is the most serious road-going Elise ever. Although arguably it's not even an Elise, because in the name of smooth airflow it's got a fixed roof... and surely that makes it an Exige?

Above: Lotus is asking for a heady £43,500 for its most hardcore road-going Elise variant, but never before has the model been so capable – particularly for trackdays at high-speed circuits

#### This month

#### LOTUS ELISES CUP

Supercharged Elise gets a race car-inspired makeover





#### **AUDITTS ROADSTER**

Is the drop-top two-seater finally a true Boxster rival?



#### BMW M235i CONVERTIBLE

Hottest 2-series loses its roof (and gains a lot of weight)



#### PEUGEOT 308 GT

Intriguing 202bhp alternative to today's full-fat hot hatches



#### BMW M3 v PORSCHE MACAN TURBO

M3's practical performance dominance comes under fire



#### The team

With the Elise S Cup our lead Driven this month, we asked the **evo** road-test team to name their favourite ever Lotus – driven or otherwise:



#### NICK TROTT

'340R. Harry Metcalfe-spec. Absolutely screaming mental. And extraordinary looks'



#### STUART GALLAGHER Managing editor

'Lotus Esprit Sport 300: homologation special, 300bhp, 1187kg, AP brakes, OZ wheels'



#### HENRY CATCHPOLE Features editor

'Exige S. I love the original S1 with its glorious VHPD K-series, but V6 power is very addictive...'



#### DAN PROSSER Road test editor

'Not been lucky enough to drive one, but the 2-Eleven looks sensational to me'



#### JETHRO BOVINGDON Contributing editor

'Esprit Sport 300. Those arches, those wheels, that booooooOOOST. Special car'



#### RICHARD MEADEN Contributing editor

'To drive: S1 Sport 135 Elise. To lust after: Essex Esprit Turbo. To race: Lotus Cortina'



#### DAVID VIVIAN Contributing editor

'Esprit Sport 350. Made most Italian exotica at the time seem fraudulent'



Sometimes claims about aero benefits can seem a little hollow. but there are a couple of reasons to be less sceptical of the S Cup. For a start, no one puts a rear diffuser that aggressive and that ugly on an otherwise delicate-looking car unless it's going to do some good. Second, we know that Lotus can back up the bodywork with numbers. Back in issue 197 Richard Meaden spent a day at Hethel going through numerous aero setups on an Exige V6 R and plotting the effects on lap deltas, so we know that when Lotus says the S Cup is approximately three seconds a lap quicker round its test track than the standard S, it's not pulling figures out of thin air. Or rather it is, because that's how aerodynamics work.

Anyway, at 100mph the S Cup produces 66kg of downforce. That's compared with just 5kg of downforce on a standard Elise S. As you'd expect, the gap only widens as speeds increase, with 125kg playing 8kg at the S Cup's top speed of 140mph. Perhaps just as impressively, Lotus has managed to make these gains in downforce while only increasing drag by eight per cent.

On Bedford Autodrome's South Circuit, the Toxic Green Elise is simply phenomenal. There is a complex of very high speed corners at the end of the start-finish straight and it feels fantastically planted, carrying much more pace than I would initially have thought possible. Despite the extra grip, the nice thing is that this Elise hasn't been made unapproachable. Push the tyres to their limits and the balance is easy to massage. The nose pushes progressively initially and it's then up to you how things develop; if you've nailed the corner just right then you'll be able to unwind the steering at the apex and feel the weight transition smoothly to the tail of the car as you accelerate out to the exit kerb. On the other hand, if you've committed too much on the way into a bend and need to lift, then the back will step out in a more markedly mid-engined fashion. Pleasingly, it's easily caught (unlike in early Elises) and you'll only feel frustrated at the speed you've





'Instant torque means you can exploit the exit of corners and play with the car far more'



Top: serious diffuser isn't for show - the S Cup develops 66kg of downforce at 100mph. Top right: a fixed roof means folding yourself into the seat is an art; Lotus's £1200 Comfort Pack is recommended for intrepid daily drivers



occasions. The Yokohama Neova AD07 trackday tyres are pleasingly feelsome and confidence inspiring, even if the conditions aren't ideal for them. With just 217bhp pushing 932kg, acceleration isn't rabid, yet it feels fast enough when you're that low to the ground. The instant torque from the supercharged engine means that you can also enjoyably exploit the exit of corners, playing with the car far more than I remember wanting to in the past. The Sport setting even provides a nicely judged safety net.

Contrary to what you might expect given the exterior, as well as the standard heater and electric windows, this car has the optional Comfort Pack fitted (£1200). Little luxuries like footwell mats, a bit more sound deadening and an Alpine

stereo don't turn it into a Boxster but, like pedestrianising the aero additions, they just take the edge off for everyday use. You could of course go the other way and make use of the extended wiring loom by fitting a battery kill switch and extinguisher system (£2394). To complete the race car vibe, an A-frame complete with harnesses is also available (£1554), along with a lightweight battery (£354) and an FIA-approved carbonfibre race seat (also £1554). One thing I rather hope is a deletable option are the flag details on the rear wing. I'm patriotic but I think it just looks a bit cheap.

Whichever way you go with the spec, it will feel like a very special place to be once you've folded yourself inside. I've worn clothes less intimate than the interior of an Elise.

lost, determined to pinpoint it next time through.

Perhaps surprisingly, the brakes are AP Racing items on the front and Brembos on the rear, but they combine to give wonderful pedal feel and huge stopping power. I'm not the greatest of late brakers, but even I find myself enjoying playing chicken at the ends of the two long straights. The only thing that doesn't like track work so much is the gearshift, which still feels slightly stringy and loose when rushed.

I'm half expecting the S Cup to be a compromised proposition as we head onto public roads, but remarkably I enjoy it even more. The roads are cold but dry as I drive home in the evening and then frosty and slippery the following morning - the Elise is huge fun on both





Above: lack of padding on the agressive seat backs is an irritating oversight by Hethel. **Right:** conspicuous Union flag end plates are a matter of taste...

#### 'The S Cup is fantastic, particularly if you have a penchant for the faster circuits like Silverstone'

The gearlever nuzzles up to your leg and the delicate pedals look like they're huddling together for warmth in the footwell, but combined with the tiny inputs needed on the steering wheel, it all promotes an economy of movement in the hands and feet that simply highlights the Elise's precision.

The S Cup's Eibach springs and Bilstein dampers are on the firm side, but the ride's not uncomfortable. What are uncomfortable are those



optional seats. I've sat on school benches that felt more forgiving. For some reason they make you sit very upright and the back in particular feels entirely unpadded, which is odd. Road test editor Dan Prosser made the same observation, so it wasn't just an oddity of my spine.

Apart from the £6000 price hike over a regular S, ultimately the biggest reason not to choose an S Cup is if you think you'll miss the ability to remove the roof. If you

can live without that versatility, however, then the S Cup is fantastic, particularly if you're a trackday fiend with a penchant for the faster circuits like Silverstone or even Spa.

You might look at Elises and idly wonder if Lotus is ever going to come up with a fresh idea for a new little sports car, but after two days in the S Cup I was left thinking more along the lines of if it ain't broke...

Henry Catchpole (@HenryCatchpole)

#### **Specification**

**Engine** CO2 **Power** Torque 0-60mph Top speed Weight **Basic price** In-line 4-cyl, 1598cc, supercharged 175g/km 217bhp @ 6800rpm 184lb ft @ 4600rpm 4.2sec (claimed) 140mph (claimed) 932kg (237bhp/ton) £43,500 Encourages its driver and rewards precision like no other Elise 📮 No possibility of getting wind in your hair evo rating







With age comes wisdom and one thing we've learnt in our 50 years is that perfection can only be achieved when you strive to be the best. Product innovation is at the heart of everything we do and Autoglym products are regarded by experts as being of the finest quality. They're also easy to use if you're new to car care and, for the more devoted, our expert advice can help transform you and your car into automotive heroes. We think that's something worth celebrating and hope you do too. That's the Autoglym way, always has been.

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THERE REALLY IS nothing like arriving on a Mediterranean island expecting some welcome January sun in which to enjoy a day's driving at the wheel of the new Audi TTS Roadster, only to be confronted by a rainstorm that would be considered excessive during winter in Wales. Sadly, despite the layer of slickness that covers everything Audi touches these days, one thing beyond its control is the weather. A pair of flippers will be more useful than your favourite pair of loafers today.

The third-generation TT Roadster follows the same path as its coupe counterpart, with 227bhp 2-litre turbocharged petrol and 181bhp 2-litre TDI four-cylinder engine

choices, and Sport and S-line trim levels. On the petrol car you have the option to replace the standard six-speed manual gearbox with an S-tronic dual-clutcher, and if you do so you can also upgrade from front-to four-wheel drive. Above all of this, though, sits the quattro-equipped TTS Roadster, its turbo 2-litre petrol unit tuned to 306bhp and mated to a manual or S-tronic 'box.

As with previous generations of TT, the only changes to the bodywork are the removal of the roof and the fitment of a rear bootlid. With the roof up, it's the first TT softtop that looks like it was designed from the outset as a convertible. It's all very cohesive. You'll have to draw your own conclusions as to how it looks with the roof down from

the pictures, because the roof will remain firmly up during our test. And why no metal folding roof? Audi's R&D boss, Ulrich Hackenberg, says they are too heavy and complicated, and that Roadster drivers generally prefer a traditional fabric roof.

Overall, the new TT Roadster is unmistakably a piece of Audi design, with taught surfaces, muscular shoulders and one of the most recognisable grilles in the business.

With the roof up and a monsoon falling, the TTS Roadster is a snug place to explore Majorca from. The interior blends Audi functionality and quality with the company's latest tech, including the 'Virtual Cockpit' – a 12.3-inch LCD in the instrument binnacle that's standard across the range. There's also a flat-bottomed

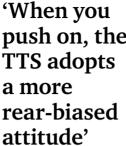
steering wheel and, if you're feeling flush, the £1795 Technology Package provides a high-speed in-car internet connection. Audi's take on Mercedes' Airscarf, which blows warm air onto the nape of your neck, could come in handy too.

The engine is carried over from the coupe, which means 306bhp and 280lb ft, a 4.9sec 0-62mph time with S-tronic (5.2sec for the manual) and a top speed limited to 155mph. The self-shifting six-speeder is inclined to reach top gear as early as possible, but knock the gearlever out of Drive and into Sport, stretch your fingers to the column-mounted paddles, and you're back in the game, controlling all the assets.

There's plenty of low-down shove to move the TTS's 1470kg (1450kg in



'When you push on, the TTS adopts a more rear-biased



manual form) and when the tacho sweeps past 3000rpm, the turbo is full to bursting with boost and your trigger finger needs to be ready for another upshift. The ratios are well spaced for the engine's power delivery, and the shifts, particularly on the way down, are rapid-fire quick, matching engine speed to road speed and serving up a crackle and pop of engineered overrun.

The latest Haldex quattro system benefits from updates to the coupe's setup, which means 100 per cent of the torque can be distributed to either axle depending on grip levels. When you push on, the TTS Roadster adopts a more rearbiased attitude to further increase its dynamic ability. It's no Boxster, but it can be encouraged to engage you in the process rather than leaving you to your own devices. The electromechanical steering isn't particularly feelsome, but it weights up nicely as you apply lock.

All-in-all, the Roadster's chassis performs beyond expectations. Audi Drive Select is standard across the range and, when combined with the switchable stability control system, the chassis can be adjusted to suit your needs. Although, on the road and when left to its own devices in Auto mode, there isn't any great



need to turn to the more aggressive Dynamic setting.

The TT is still a compact sports car - this new model is shorter than the car it replaces but crucially has a longer wheelbase, the benefits of which make themselves apparent in quicker corners, where confidence and stability are key. The only limiting factor our test TTS Roadster highlights is related to the OEM 19-inch Hankook tyres, which are frankly awful. Up to a point they work well with the TT's underpinnings, doing what is asked of them. But push that extra tenth

or two and, despite the car more than feeling up to the task in hand, the tyres give up far too easily in wet conditions, with alarming rates of push-on understeer in particular.

Nevertheless, this new Audi TTS Roadster is now a serious proposition. Some may never be able to see beyond the effeminate connotations of Ingolstadt's sports car, but look beyond the prejudices and this TTS should be on your list of contenders immediately below Porsche's Boxster S.

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

#### **Specification**

In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbo

CO2

features Audi's Virtual

Cockpit and a seatbelt-

integrated microphone.

**Right:** fabric roof opens

of up to 31mph; topless

TT weighs 85kg more

than equivalent coupe

or closes in just ten seconds at road speeds

159g/km

306bhp @ 5800-6200rpm

Torque

280lb ft @ 1800-5700rpm

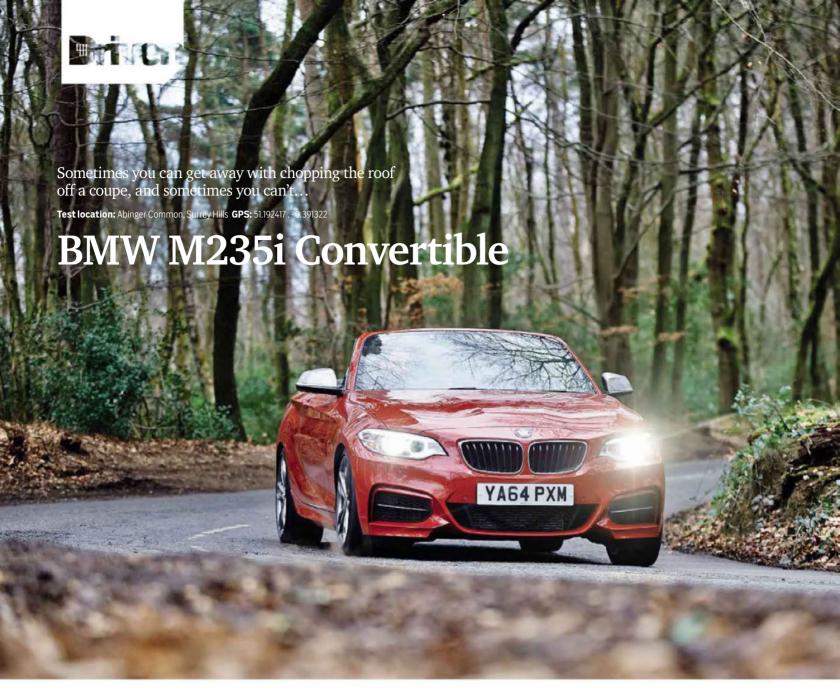
0-62mph 4.9sec (claimed)

Top speed 155mph (limited)

Weight 1470kg (212bhp/ton) **Basic price** £41,085

evo rating





IN FIXED-ROOF COUPE form, the BMW M235i was one of the realworld stars of 2014.
On the face of it a spot of wind-in-

the-hair motoring might just be the final blustery flourish needed to turn a four-and-a-half star car into the complete package, but when you dive into the spec sheet and realise the drop-top model is burdened with an additional 145kg of flab, that soon seems unlikely.

The sheer amount of bracing that is required to prevent a decapitated car from folding in on itself at the first sight of a corner is so massive that all dynamism and precision goes the same way as the roofline. What's more, the 145kg of steel that BMW has welded to the beheaded

structure demonstrably isn't enough; it's actually possible to see the steering wheel shuddering about the cabin over bumpy sections of road as the shell twists and deforms.

Unwelcome flex aside, the M235i Convertible does actually do a passable impression of the Coupe in spirited driving, to a point. On turn-in it still finds good bite across the front wheels before leaning hard on its rear axle; it remains neatly balanced and finely poised. It can also be neutralised at corner exit under power, which is where the sense of engagement and two-way interaction can be found in this car.

You need only to push a little harder to feel the consequences of that lost structural rigidity and additional weight, though. As the

steering column and windscreen surround shimmy this way and that, the chassis also seems to reach its limits sooner than the Coupe model does. There isn't the same body control through direction changes and the steering itself is also appreciably less crisp and accurate. It passes through brief moments of stickiness and patches of hyperactive response as the lock is dialled in and out. It feels more like a primitive EPAS system rather than the M235i Coupe's very convincing electric setup.

What the Convertible does share with the fixed-roof model, however, is its sense of waywardness over undulations. Rather than settling immediately after a vertical input, the rear axle instead gets out of

sync with the shape of the road, which can be quite alarming at pace. It's possible that the rear axle is quite soft both in compression and roll because this very torquerich drivetrain has to work with an open differential. A very stiff, firmly controlled rear end would be disastrous in traction terms without an LSD.

On the plus side, the turbocharged straight-six and optional eight-speed ZF automatic gearbox are still no less than excellent. The self-shifting 'box is very well suited to the Convertible's more relaxed character – it's always quick and smooth in both auto and manual mode – while the engine is responsive, torquey and keen to rev. In fact, the 332lb ft from 1300rpm



Right: cabin can be blustery without the wind-deflector in place, and that steals the rear seats. Below, from left: blue calipers denote M-series brakes; Convertible more cruiser than hustler: test car an eight-speed auto







'Unwelcome flex aside, the M235i Convertible does actually do a passable impression of the Coupe in spirited driving'

does a very fine job of disguising the Convertible's extra weight - you'd have to be familiar with both cars to identify any significant loss of accelerative thrust.

The 2-series Convertible, which effectively replaces the 1-series Convertible, was designed to be altogether more useable every day than the previous model. To that end the boot is bigger and more readily accessible through a wider opening, the fabric roof cuts wind noise and it can also be activated in just 20 seconds at speeds up to 31mph. BMW claims to have reduced decibel levels within the cabin with the roof in place by half. Since the decibel scale isn't linear, that doesn't guite mean that this new car is half as noisy as the old car on a cruise, but this roof certainly does a decent impression of a fixed metal top.

Being a four-seat coupe (adults won't thank you for leaving them crammed into the rear bench for too long) the roof opening is a big one, which means the cabin is a blustery place without the wind deflector in place. The interior itself is very standard BMW fare in terms of design, while the quality

and fit is generally very good. The unsightly shut lines between the two mouldings that make up the door handle do let the side down, though.

Although the M235i Convertible falls some way short of the Coupe in terms of dynamic ability, it is far and away the pick of the 2-series Convertible line up. The more potent engine and slightly more focused chassis elevate it above the tepid 228i model that we've also driven, but this is, nonetheless, one for the image conscious rather than the driving enthusiast.

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)

#### **Specification**

Torque 0-62mph Top speed Weight **Basic price** In-line 6-cyl, 2979cc, turbocharged 184g/km 332lb ft @ 1300-4500rpm 321bhp @ 5800-6000rpm 5.0sec (claimed) 155mph (limited) 1695kg (192bhp/ton)



### Peugeot 308 GT 1.6 THP

**Test location:** Lisbon, Portugal **GPS:** 38.850336, -9.322843

Greater things are in store for the 308 nameplate, but the new GT is a promising start

**Photography:** Pete Gibson

perceptions of power change. Take the original Ford Sierra
Cosworth. It had 204bhp. It was enough to make your heart thump harder, enough to hassle a supercar. Yet by the mid-noughties, 200 had become a number that merely

denoted 'fail' for any hot hatch that

couldn't muster it. A decade later, in

2015, 300 is the new 200.

**HOW RAPIDLY OUR** 

Which isn't to say the 200bhp hatch has been buried. As with everything in the modern car range, it's all about calibration. In Peugeot's badge hierarchy, occupying the slot below the forthcoming GTi and R, plain GT provides a comfortable, not-too-demanding retirement home for the once exalted output. There's a less powerful but torquier diesel and an SW wagon plumping out the line-up too but, in twin-scroll turbocharged 1.6 THP petrol form,

Its 202bhp is developed at 6000rpm and supported by 210lb ft of torque that kicks in at just 1750rpm. The car will do 146mph (3mph up on the Cossie) and sprint

textbook definition of a warm hatch.

the 308 GT appears to be 2015's

to 62mph in a claimed 7.5 seconds if you're a dab hand with the six-speed manual gearbox, and there really isn't much excuse because the shift action is as light and slick as they come. If you press a button on the centre console near the stubby gearlever, you can have a gruffer, electronically manipulated engine note piped through the speakers in the door panels.

Along with the mildly sporting wheels, spoilers and interior, there are broadly spaced faux exhaust tails that venture nowhere near the actual exhaust pipe and wouldn't look out of place on an AMG Mercedes. Mixed messages? Nothing so clumsy. Just well-chosen veneers expertly matched to preserve the illusion of hard-knuckled exuberance without quite having the wherewithal to go there.

Costing £24,095, you can certainly buy more power and performance for your money (Ford Focus ST, SEAT Leon Cupra et al) but the Peugeot nudges attention away from raw stats with a very smart cabin, plenty of standard kit and even a little Audi-esque sophistication in the form of all-LED headlights.



Inside, Peugeot's current obsession with dinky steering wheels, high-set instruments and jumbo touchscreens is still contentious for some, but the layout works and does look strikingly different in a world of rather formulaic go-faster interiors. The fit and quality of the materials are also conspicuously good.

As, for the most part, is the driving experience, so long as you've taken the trouble to manage your expectations. Perhaps the best thing about the chassis is the way it negotiates the sweet spot between pliancy and precision. It used to be Peugeot's 'thing' and it's evident here. There are proper hot hatches that will serve up more initial excitement and involvement, but I reckon the 308 GT would have their measure on rough roads, staying composed and unruffled over bumps

and ruts that can jar so rudely on stiff springs and dampers. No, the 308 GT doesn't have quite as much outright grip or the hair-trigger transient responses, but there's nothing wrong with its helm, which is quick, accurate, well weighted and communicative. The GT turns in keenly and, another bygone Peugeot trick, can transform understeer into oversteer with the throttle alone, albeit not as suddenly as the infamously snappy 205 GTI of yore. In short, the 308 GT flows well and has fine roll-on pace, which goes a long way to nullifying any perceived shortfall in straight-line thump.

Not that it feels that much. The THP engine has an excellent spread of power and torque, to the point where it almost doesn't feel like a turbocharged unit. Peak twist arrives at just 1750rpm, but the motor spins smoothly and eagerly to 5500rpm before the urge begins to tail off.

So yes, we've come a long way. A five-door hatchback with 202bhp no longer cuts it as 'hot'. If you merely crave an easy life that's slightly less ordinary, however, the 308 GT is just about perfect.

David Vivian (@davidjvivian)

#### **Specification**

Engine CO2 Torque 0-62mph Top speed Weight **Basic price** In-line 4-cyl, 1598cc, turbo 130g/km 202bhp @ 6000rpm 210lb ft @ 1750-4500rpm 7.5sec (claimed) 1200kg (171bhp/ton) £24,095 146mph (limited) \*\*\*\* 👪 Effortlessly brisk; well-judged chassis; stylish 🧧 Pricey, short on genuine thrills evo rating

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## Twin test: Porsche Macan Turbo v BMW M3

Test location: Podington, Bedfordshire, UK GPS: 52.251445, -0.63920

You have an enviable sum of money to spend on a fast but practical performance car that puts the driver first. Should – for the very first time – your shortlist include an SUV?

Photography: Aston Parrott





WITH ITS MIGHTY Macan Turbo, Porsche has asked some pretty stern questions of the established players in the £60,000 family performance car market. This genre - which has been dominated in recent years by the BMW M3 saloon, Audi RS4 and Mercedes C63 AMG has never before offered its buyers an SUV-style ride height in tandem with suitably fierce performance and real driver engagement. In that sense the Macan Turbo could be an entirely new proposition. Given how highly the premium marketplace regards SUVs (and anything with a Porsche crest on its snout for that matter), it looks as though Weissach might have turned the genre on its head.

The real question, of course, is whether or not the Macan Turbo really does merit comparison with the best in class in outright dynamic

terms. The current class leader is the new BMW M3 (although hopes remain high that the new Mercedes C63 AMG will have a fair pop at it) and so, in Yas Marina Blue, it lines up to defend the honour of the traditional family performance car.

Even if we ignore the respective hues of these test cars, it's pretty clear that the M3 makes a lot more noise about its firepower and intent. It is very definitely a high performance car, while the Macan Turbo could, but for the badging, be running a dismal diesel engine. In fact, the Porsche trails the BMW by just 31bhp and matches it for peak torque output; the M3's twin-turbo straight-six delivers 425bhp, with 406lb ft of torque from 1850rpm, while the Macan's twin-turbo V6 peaks at 394bhp and boasts the same 406lb ft, only 500rpm sooner at just 1350rpm.

Objectively there's very little to choose between the two engines. but the M3 does have a significant weight advantage. BMW claims 1560kg with the optional M DCT 'box, some 365kg less than Porsche claims for the Macan Turbo (which is only available with PDK). Given its modest footprint, the word that best seems to describe the Macan is 'dense'. So it follows that in straight-line terms the BMW is the quicker of the two. Our timing gear shows that the four-wheel-drive Macan hits 30mph from standstill in 1.7sec. three-tenths ahead of the M3, but by 60mph the BMW is fourtenths ahead. It clocks a rapid 4.1sec 0-60mph dash, after which it seems to light its afterburners as it rips to 100mph in just 8.6sec (that's Ferrari F430-quick, by the way), while the Macan needs a further 2.5 seconds to hit the ton. By any reasonable







measure, the Macan Turbo is a very fast car; the M3 just happens to be unreasonably fast.

Like its two-door M4 stablemate, the M3 is, in the right conditions, a very effective drivers' car. On a dry, smooth road it finds remarkable grip at the front axle on turn-in. It feels sharp, agile and fearsomely quick in a straight line. There's real quality to the damping over surface imperfections and compressions, too, while the intermediate suspension setting returns good pliancy over bumps.

In dynamic terms the M3 isn't without its flaws, however. That monstrous surge of torque causes the rear axle quite significant problems in the lower gears; with the front wheels at any angle other than dead straight, the break of traction under load can be quite sudden. The locking M differential does at least make that traction break consistent and, with familiarity, predictable.

With the stability control system knocked back to its M Dynamic mode, the driver can bring the rear end into play under power, which makes the M3 a fun and engaging 'On roads
that crest and
trough, the
M3 runs out of
body control
well before
it runs out
of grip'



thing without being intimidating. Naturally, with the systems fully off it'll drift for Germany.

The electrically assisted steering is nicely detailed once the chassis is loaded up mid-corner, which allows the driver to feel the point at which the front tyres will start to scrub wide. With the chassis unloaded, however – at the point of initial turn-in, for instance – the steering is rather vague. This makes exploiting the enormous turn-in grip a matter of confidence and familiarity, not one of immediate intuition.

On roads that crest and trough, the M3 runs out of body control well before it runs out of grip. None of the damper modes seem to tie the rear axle to the road surface, so vertical inputs cause the back end of the car to pogo just as the driver wants to feel that it's locked down. Combining pliancy with solid body control is a trick reserved for the very best performance cars. Unfortunately, it's a trick the M3 can't perform.

The imbalanced torque-totraction ratio, the remoteness of the steering on turn-in and the lack



Above: Macan's cabin borrows its style from other Porsches; its wheel is even based on the 918's. **Below left:** M3's low-set seat provides a more sporting driving position 'The Macan responds with some of the precision and control of a good hot hatch. Over undulating roads it's actually better tied to the surface than the M3'

of body control on cresting roads all conspire to make the M3 feel like a proper handful at the limit, which gnaws away at the driver's confidence. This isn't a car that benignly invites its driver to place it on the edge and keep it there. On the right road and in the right conditions (the aggressive Michelin Pilot Super Sports are out of their depth in wet weather) the M3 is ferociously fast and enjoyable, but it doesn't have the broad comfort zone that marks out a great sports saloon.

What first impresses in the Macan is the quality of the ride in the normal suspension mode. It's so well cushioned and fluid that doubts arise as to the car's on-the-limit dynamic potential. In corners, the Macan also rolls and slops about, settling into persistent understeer quite readily. Switch to a firmer chassis mode, though, and it really does sharpen its responses. Suddenly it feels alert and agile, with little body roll. It begins to respond with some of the precision and





Engine	C02	Power	0-62mph
In-line 6-cyl, 2979cc, twin-turbo	194g/km	425bhp @ 5500-7300rpm	4.1sec (claimed)
Torque	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
406lb ft @ 1850-5500rpm	155mph (limited)	1560kg (277bhp/ton)	£56,590

🖪 Performance, styling, dry-weather handling 📮 Engine lacks character, on-limit body control

evo rating



#### Porsche Macan Turbo

Engine	CO2	Power	0-62mph
V6, 3604cc, twin-turbo	216g/km	394bhp @ 6000rpm	4.8sec (claimed)
Torque	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
406lb ft @ 1350-4500rpm	165mph (claimed)	1925kg (208bhp/ton)	£59,648

evo rating \*\*\*\*



🕒 Perhaps the best performance SUV on sale 🧧 Still not a match for a proper sports saloon

control of a good hot hatch and over

undulating roads is actually better tied down than the M3.

In second-gear bends it'll even mimic the M3's signature cornering stance. Turn in, let the car settle, then stand abruptly on the power and the driver will feel the fourwheel-drive system directing torque towards the outside rear wheel. This then breaks traction, sending the Macan into a genuine powerslide, albeit a rather short one. Of course, that sort of behaviour is unduly aggressive, but it's the most vivid demonstration of the Macan's fundamental agility and poise in corners. It won't pull off the same trick in third-gear bends, but the driver will appreciate an underlying sense of nimbleness that sits at odds with the SUV shape.

'The Porsche is freakishly capable for an SUV and it's very nearly a match for the BMW in terms of crosscountry pace'

Soon enough, however, the laws of physics intervene. In rapid direction changes, the Macan surrenders to its weight and ride height. Its front axle will give up sooner than the M3's and its helm is also less precise. Although the M3 isn't any kind of universal dynamic benchmark, it has much less to overcome than the Porsche and so sets standards for involvement and fun that the Macan simply can't match.

Downsized, turbocharged engines will become increasingly commonplace in the coming years and these are two of the best examples of the moment. While the M3's 3-litre unit has more of a ripping top end and fractionally sharper responses than the Macan's 3.6, it's actually the BMW's powerplant that becomes more of a sticking point; a

torque-rich, muted style of delivery is quite appropriate for a fast SUV, but it's less at ease in a bona fide M-car. All that separates their twinclutch gearboxes, meanwhile, is a little more abruptness at the point of re-engagement in the M3.

The Porsche is freakishly capable for an SUV and it's very nearly a match for the BMW in terms of cross-country pace, but it simply isn't as much fun. For all its ability, the Macan Turbo hasn't quite turned the £60,000 family performance car genre inside out. There'll be a great many buyers out there who will find much to admire about its unrivalled concoction of performance, dynamic ability and SUV ride height, but enthusiastic drivers will find that the traditional way is still king.

**Dan Prosser** (@TheDanProsser)



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Luca di Montezemolo sharing a pint (and possibly some pork scratchings) with Guy Martin? Welcome to Meaden's fantasy local...

N

**NONE OF YOU WILL BE SURPRISED TO** read that working on **evo** can be a pretty jammy gig. The hours can be long and unpredictable – or predictably long if you're one of the unsung office-based members of the team – and the pay spares

you the bind of deciding what to blow your disposable income on, but the things we get to do and the people we get to meet on your behalf often bring their own rewards.

What may come as more of a surprise is that many of the truly special moments come when we're washing a precious car with freezing cold water in some remote Welsh lay-by, or back at the hotel when the cars have been parked and the cameras put away. In short, the banter can often be a match for the driving.

Of course, it helps that **evo** has some of the most illustrious wheel washers in the business. Spend a few days – and consume a few beers – with Tiff Needell, Andy Wallace and Marino Franchitti and the conversation can be pure petrolhead heaven. Some might say their talents are wasted doing our menial chores. I beg to differ, for whether it's on some windswept hillside, or cosy fireside in the hotel bar, these boys have some amazing tales to tell. We've yet to persuade Dario Franchitti to get his hands cold and dirty, but I've no doubt his tales

of turning left at 230mph would make the bleakest conditions infinitely more bearable.

All of which got me wondering about the people who would comprise my ultimate gathering of car-related heroes. Yes, I know, it's nothing more than a petrol-infused twist on that most middle-class daydream, the celebrity dinner party guest list, but c'mon, tell me it's not a fun game to play. You can run it to your own rules, too, which means you can stick to racers or mix it up a bit.

Who would be propping up the bar in my fantasy pub (called The Chequered Flag, in case you were wondering) or sitting round my dining table? It's predictable, but my first guest would have to be Sir Stirling Moss. He might have been interviewed more times than any other racing driver alive today, but when you've done as much as he has, thrilling yarns will not be in short supply. How did Mille Miglia compare with Targa Florio? Was the Dundrod TT circuit more hair-raising than either? What car did he wish he'd raced, but didn't?

I'm not an 'industry' journalist, so I don't tend to meet many car bosses, but of those I have, Luca di Montezemolo is by far the most mesmerising. Anyone who can command a filled auditorium's attention with an unscripted speech would surely make for a compelling dinner guest. Life at Ferrari in the Lauda years. Knowing Enzo. Reinventing the company and the recent parting

of ways. The man has experienced many lifetimes' worth of adventure and achievement.

My third invitee would be Guy Martin. Not least because I'd love to be in the room when the impossibly Italian LdM and the garbled Grimbarian attempt to converse. Linguistics aside, I reckon Martin is genuinely one of the nicest, yet most fiercely competitive blokes around. His love of history and engineering would ensure he'd appreciate the company he's in, and his racer's heart would forge an instant bond with those around him. And anyone who races around the Isle of Man would certainly have everyone else's respect.

Next up, Craig Breedlove. I've got a bit of a thing for the World Land Speed Record. The drama, the people, the machines and the relentlessness of the quest make it one of mankind's purest

# 'I'd love to be in the room when the impossibly Italian LdM **and the garbled Grimbarian** attempt to converse'

and most inspiring challenges. As a five-time WSR holder, Breedlove is one of the all-time great speed kings. The first man to breach 500 and 600mph – and the first man to survive a 675mph drift! – he is a true pioneer and an extraordinary figure in the lethal realm of straight-line speed. Now aged 77, his desire for the WSR remains undimmed.

My fifth guest would be Vic Elford. Another septagenarian racer, and another man with remarkable tales to tell. In 1968 he began the year by winning the Monte Carlo Rally in a Porsche 911. A week later he won the Daytona 24 Hours in a Porsche 907. That summer he won the Targa Florio and the Nürburgring 1000km, then came fourth on his F1 debut at the French Grand Prix. You name it, Quick Vic's been there and done it.

My list could go on. As I'm sure will yours, for once you start, it's horribly addictive. Valentino Balboni. Derek Bell. Sir Jackie Stewart. Murray Walker. Walter Röhrl. The only tricky bit would not be getting star-struck. Of course, it'll never happen, but at least I can always console myself with those perishing interludes on **evo** group tests. Whoever said don't meet your heroes obviously never washed wheels with Andy Wallace.

(a) @DickieMeaden

Richard is a contributing editor to **evo** and one of the magazine's founding team



# Petrolhead

by RICHARD PORTER



Finding a carefully stored old car part in his father's garage has got Porter feeling nostalgic for simpler, more resourceful times

IT WAS AT THE VERY BACK OF THE cupboard above the old workbench in my dad's garage. A jauntily striped red, white and blue box, about an inch tall, a little longer and wider, bearing the words 'BMC GENUINE PARTS'.

I took the little box out of the cupboard and opened it. Inside, wrapped in yellowing, BMC-branded paper were the guts of a switch from an original Mini and a little strip of paper from BMC Service Ltd warning that 'No complaint respecting contents of this package will be considered unless accompanied by this slip'. It had a date stamped on the back: 11 DEC 1967.

My dad did own a 1960s Mini. He owned it in the 1960s. It was sold not long after the date on the paper, when he moved on to a Cortina. Which means that, for the past 47 years, my father has kept a minor spare part for a car he doesn't have.

I asked him about this. 'Dad,' I said, 'I've just found an old bit for a Mini at the back of the cupboard in the garage, but you haven't owned a Mini for almost 50 years.'

'I know,' he said. 'That's why it was at the back.' I was so blindsided by this logic, I didn't have a comeback, and by the time I did he'd moved on to talking about the weather or which one of his friends had died this week.

I went back to the garage and looked again at the little BMC box. Up until now, I wouldn't have called my dad a hoarder. But here we were, clearing out the old family home of almost 40 years, and from the kitchen cupboards to the carpet off-cut chasm of the loft we were finding bits and pieces that any rational person would have chucked or burnt around the time of Prince Charles's first wedding. The garage alone was an extraordinary trip down car memory lane, through touch-up paints and fan belts and various bits of service ephemera for cars that have long gone.

My dad was an engineer, starting his career working on hydroelectric power stations. By the time he retired he was an advisor on oils and assorted unctions for heavy industrial machinery. He always had an engineer's mind, based on order and precision. He couldn't relax if the kitchen scissors had been put back in the wrong place. It would visibly pain him if you tried to open an envelope using your finger rather than the neat, crisp slice of the letter opener. At first I was mystified as to why a logical and sensible man would hang on to a redundant item like the spare Mini switch. But my puzzlement gave way to a wistfulness for what the carefully stashed spare actually represented.

My dad was born in 1937. He's from a generation that abhorred

waste. It was programmed into them that you made do and you mended. Just because you didn't have a use for something now, that didn't mean you wouldn't find a purpose for it in the future. To throw it away would be wasteful. And when something broke, you might have a gimlet or gubbins tucked away that could be used to repair it. My dad, being technically minded, was always good at fixing stuff. But whatever your day job, there was a time when, if something broke, you got your tools out and you tried to mend it.

Conversely, I can't remember the last time I tried to fix anything. Maybe that's why the inexplicable BMC parts box made me nostalgic for a time when people were less wasteful, a bit more resourceful and a lot more hands on. I don't want to be one

'A lot of what breaks these days is electronic and you're not going to fix that with a socket set. It's why everyone of my generation has a drawer full of dead mobile phones'

> of those misty-eyed bores yearning for times past because, truth is, things change and we move on. A lot of what breaks these days is electronic and you're not going to fix that with a socket set. It's why everyone of my generation has a drawer full of dead mobile phones. And why those mobile phones are a strata sitting on a sub-soil of knackered Walkmans.

> Really, what the BMC box reminded me of was happy Saturdays as a child, watching my dad expertly dismantling, inspecting and reassembling countless items, from toys to entire car engines, and marvelling at how brilliant he was at this stuff. I won't get to do that in front of my son.

> On the plus side, I have stored up at least part of this experience for my boy because, when it came to slinging stuff from my father's garage into a skip, I got to the Mini switch in its brightly coloured box and couldn't bear to chuck it. So I took it home with me. And one day, I like to imagine that my kids will come to me and say, 'Dad, what the bloody hell have you got this for?' ■

@sniffpetrol

Richard is evo's longest-serving columnist and is also the keyboard behind sniffpetrol.com

# SUPERCAR TEST EVENT 29TH MAY - 1ST JUNE 2015 **TEST DRIVE EVO'S** CAR OF THE YEAR 2014 - FERRARI 458 SPECIALE over 3 days in the Black Forest against 9 other cars including the new Lamborghini Huracan and Mercedes-AMG GT. To register your interest and receive a full information pack, visit us at: www.ultimatedrives.net/supercar-tours

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#### The naturally aspirated engine is becoming an endangered species, and Dario, for one, is mourning its demise

THE TURBOCHARGER'S TIME HAS finally arrived. News that Ferrari's 458 replacement will ditch the company's earsplitting, spine-tingling naturally aspirated 4.5-litre V8 for a 3.9-litre turbocharged engine makes me sad. I'm sure Ferrari's engine boys have designed and

built an equally brilliant motor in terms of performance and efficiency, but for me you can't beat a naturally aspirated engine. It's a cliché, but the engine really is the heart of a car.

It's not just Ferrari heading down the turbo route. Porsche is set to replace the 911's normally aspirated flat-sixes with a new range of turbocharged motors by the end of the year - a move some will claim to be bigger than when the 911 switched from

air- to water-cooling. The roar of a naturally aspirated flat-six, like the wail of a V8 and the scream of a V12, plays such an integral role in connecting you to a car that, no matter how sophisticated the design and technology of these new turbocharged engines, they are always going to struggle with that emotional attachment a naturally aspirated engine provides.

Turbocharged engines have come a long way since the days of turbo lag and unpredictable boost. The oldest turbo-engined road car I've driven is a 930 - the firstgen 911 Turbo - which has turbo lag you measure in seconds as you feel the boost build before it fires you down the road. It's enjoyable, but in a different way to a car with a naturally aspirated engine. In the latter, the enjoyment comes from many elements: the quick throttle response and the ability to balance the car on the throttle to name just two. With a turbo engine, the challenge comes from mastering the power delivery, adjusting how you drive to maximise the performance. This means getting on the power before the apex, so the turbo's on boost just when you need it. If you're too early, it arrives just when you don't need it, too late and you'll exit the corner waiting for what feels like an age for the engine to come alive. Master driving an old turbo car, as anyone fortunate enough to have driven a 935 or 917/30 will know, and there's enjoyment to be had; fail to do so and you're left wondering if the performance is worth the effort.

But when I was younger, driving Fiat's Uno Turbo and Ford's Escort RS Turbo, I remember thinking how excited I was just to have access to such performance, experiencing that kick in the back with every - delayed - delivery of boost. It was unsophisticated, but it was fun, and when I drove a Sierra Cosworth it was exactly the same - but faster! A few years later, chasing Bernd Schneider on the Autobahn in an EB110 at

200mph – the first time I hit the double ton – it was just magical as those turbos chirped away, adding to the thrill. I didn't care what engine the Bugatti had, I just knew it was bloody fast.

With the F40, when the turbos are spinning it has great feel and is very precise, but if you let them stop, it takes an age to get them going again. That said, the moment an F40 lights up its rear tyres as the boost kicks in makes you glad to be alive. Although if you don't catch the oversteer you won't be alive for long. You have to play the F40 like a musical instrument to overcome its challenges - that's one of the biggest thrills. But then there's the sound. It's a great car, but it's not a great sounding car, and sometimes we forget how important it is for a car to sound right if you want to connect with it.

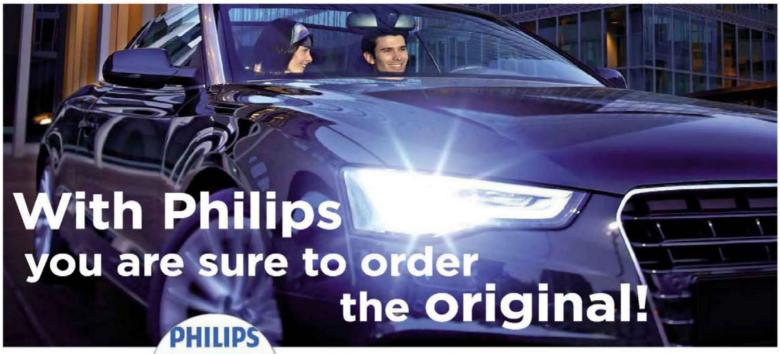
#### 'You have to play the Ferrari F40 like a musical instrument to overcome its challenges'

What's interesting is that Ferrari returned to a naturally aspirated engine for the F50, McLaren didn't consider turbos for the F1, and even Porsche, while continually developing its turbocharged engine for the 911, has stuck with normally aspirated engines for its motorsport cars such as the GT3. I do hope it can find a way to continue to offer a naturally aspirated flat-six, just as I hope Ferrari and Lamborghini can still build their brilliant V12s.

That normally aspirated engines are slowly being forced out by forced induction motors is significant. I know manufacturers will eradicate the turbo engine's shortcomings with their involvement in Formula 1, the World Endurance Championship and IndyCar. The turbocharged engine Honda built for Champ Car was so advanced it was almost like driving a normally aspirated engine, and I'm sure Honda's new NSX, the Ford GT, the Ferrari and the Porsches will be great turbocharged cars. They just won't sound as good!

Ultimately, there will be those who favour turbocharged cars and those who will always opt for a normally aspirated engine. Either way it's great that we still – for now – have a choice. ■

Dario is a three-time Indy 500 winner 🕒 @dariofranchitti ㅣ and four-time IndyCar champ





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Original Equipment quality xenon lamps on the market today. As a result, Philips xenon lamps are being copied. Counterfeit xenon lamps are becoming increasingly available through online and offline distribution channels. These counterfeit lamps are cheap imitations of inferior quality that are not precision-mounted, and may result in poor road illumination or the blinding of oncoming drivers.

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Philips is the first to create an innovative, pro-active solution against rising xenonlighting piracy



Philips is the first automotive lighting manufacturer to address the xenon-lamp piracy issue. In order to protect their customers and all consumers from counterfeit Philips lighting products, Philips has created a pro-active solution using unique, state-of-the-art technology. Philips Certificate of Authenticity (COA) is now available on every new xenon lamp package you order.

pass a vehicle inspection. The counterfeit xenon lamps can short-circuit the electrical system of a vehicle and might even damage the onboard computer system. They may also cause a fire and, consequently, major damage to the vehicle. The installation of such automotive lamps is illegal, and garages and shops expose themselves to litigation if they install counterfeit Philips xenon lamps on customer vehicles. It may also invalidate the shop insurance. In addition, installers could be at risk of liability in case of an accident resulting in vehicle damage or personal injury. The appearance of counterfeit automobile lamps on the consumer market has become a global problem affecting other automotive lighting manufacturers in the world today. Philips is the first manufacturer to develop a pro-active solution using a state-of-the-art Certificate of Authenticity (COA) in order to protect their distributors, garages and other automotive professionals from counterfeit products. All professionals are now able

to verify instantly if they are buying a genuine Philips xenon lamp.

Each product has its own unique COA security code as well as other special security elements with which professionals can verify the authenticity of the Philips product on





a dedicated, fully secure Internet platform. Professionals also have the possibility of additional verification using a magnifying glass by examining the Micro Code next to the Philips logo, which must match the Security code.

Philips is committed to helping protect its customers from poor imitations of inferior quality that may damage a vehicle or result in personal injury. From now on, professionals will only have to look on the xenon lamp package for the Philips Certificate of Authenticity and verify it on the Philips website to know if they are buying a genuine Philips xenon lamp.











# nbox

### Who's been bombarding you with clickbait this month?



## **Advantage Alpina**

I felt compelled to write in about your tests with the BMW M4 and Alpina B4 & D4 (evo 206). I'm a BMW man through and through, and had placed an order for an M4 in May 2014.

Then I had a back-to-back test drive of an M4 and an Alpina B4 at Sytner Nottingham. I was left bewildered by how BMW could have got the M4 so wrong. With all its expertise and years of experience, it has made a car that, in my opinion, operates in a very narrow window, i.e. dry, flat roads with plenty of run-off. The B4, meanwhile, offers as near as dammit the same pace, but without the unnecessary drama and histrionics. By comparison, the M4 is a flawed, blunt and crude instrument.

I cancelled my M4 order. I think BMW's engineers should remind themselves what an M-car's USPs are. Let's hope not too much damage has been done to the M brand and that BMW can deliver the car M drivers always wanted.

#### **Brent Powell**



#### The Letter of the Month wins an Elliot Brown watch

This month's star letter writer receives an Elliot Brown Canford 202-005 (pictured), worth £325. Its custom shock absorption system and permanently sealed crowns help ensure this rugged timepiece can be worn every day - no matter what's thrown at it.

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#### Carlton correction

I suspect others will have picked up on the unusual hyper Lotus Carlton to 'consider' as an alternative to the Chrysler 300C Hemi in Market Watch (evo 206). Oh for a V8, but I believe the car actually ran a 3.6-litre, 24-valve twin-turbo straight-six, derived from the non-turbo 3-litre unit in its baby sister, the Carlton GSi.

In the early 1990s we used one of the latter at the Traffic Department of Kent Police based near Canterbury. It was unmarked, in white, with Minilites. and fitted with video equipment to detect more serious offenders. and was used predominantly on our motorway system.

One morning, with a television crew on board, it followed a powerful Toyota on the M20 near Folkestone. reaching 156mph during the incident at that time one of the highest speeds recorded on a UK road. Not bad for an engine block that originated in a Bedford lorry...

#### Malcolm Brockman

#### A different class

I was interested to read Dan Prosser's review of the Rolls-Royce Wraith in evo 205. I was recently driven in one and completely agree with most of the comments. However, I would go somewhat further on the issue of the BMW association.

Since I own a Bentley Continental R from the era when both Rolls and Bentleys were made at Crewe, I was curious to see how the quality of the Wraith's interior trim and fittings compared. I was genuinely shocked to discover that the famous eyeball vents are now made of chromed plastic rather than the machined and plated steel of those in my own car.

Wherever I looked, I was suspicious that what appeared to be chrome-



Above: they don't make 'em like they used to, says Gerard Baines of new Rolls-Royces

plated metal might in fact be plastic. For example, the oddments tray next to the gearlever is clearly made of lightweight shiny plastic and rattles around even when gently jiggled.

There is no doubt that huge engineering progress has been made, but such cars used to be built without regard to cost when it came to interior fittings and materials. Sadly, I feel that is no longer the case.

#### Gerard Baines

#### Mac fact

Having driven McLaren P1s and F1s a fair amount, I was naturally interested in your article 'McLaren Heaven' (evo 205). It did not disappoint - as usual, Richard Meaden's thoughts were stimulating and insightful.

I must, however, take exception to the accompanying article, 'F1 v P1: let's get technical'. In it. Michael Whitelev asserts that the motive behind the F1's central driving position was 'to solve the problems of pedal box offset and visibility'. In fact the primary motive for the central driving position was that... it was in the centre.

A central driving position is far superior to a standard offset one and was essential to Gordon Murray achieving his overarching goal: to create the best drivers' car possible. It also enabled the F1 uniquely to carry a driver and two passengers, or one passenger and enough luggage to put the P1 and its counterparts to shame.

#### Paul Flemke

We mainly concentrated on technical aspects in our article – hence the focus on the pedal box. Many supercars from the F1's era suffered from pedal box offset (think Ferrari F40) and the packaging for the F1 solved this problem - even if it was a by-product of providing the perfect driving position! - MW



Above: F1's central seat was chosen for a superior driving position, says Paul Flemke





#### New Honda NSX

The new NSX boasts a twin-turbo V6, three electric motors and a total power output of 550bhp+, all for around £150,000. Should Porsche, Audi, Mercedes-AMG, Ferrari et al be worried?

In a word, no. £150k is hardly a bargain and it's up against serious talent with more desirable badges. It doesn't look anything special either, quite generic. tazsura

The last NSX was a game changer, so maybe this one will be too.

#### McSwede

Technically, didn't BMW beat them with the i8? It has less power, but the NSX is also 50 per cent more expensive. I doubt any car costing £150k can be classed as a game changer since it is in reality a luxury toy, so I doubt any other manufacturer will be that worried. The front of the new NSX is also a vile mess.

#### Philomena Cunk

It will have to be something truly astonishing to be a game changer. Compared to when the original came out, the competition has upped the game significantly in terms of durability, reliability and driveability, if road tests are to be believed. I'm not sure I can see that happening, and with no superstar connection in the development (that we know of), it has a very large mountain to climb.

#### **DeskJockey**

Isn't the whole 'handling by Senna' thing for the original NSX a myth and he actually did pretty much no development work on the car? Just get Alonso and Button to tool around in the new one and do a bit of marketing that they were involved in its development. Job done!

Marv

I wonder whether they'll be involved in the NSX's marketing at all, seeing as at that price it would be a direct rival for the McLaren Sport Series.

#### ukpete

I would have thought that most people that have £150k to spend on a performance car may be able to spend £200k for a 458 or whatever. I think Honda may find it tough.

#### Matty1980

I think it depends on what the NSX offers. Although it's similar in concept to the i8 it will seemingly offer much higher performance for relatively little extra cash (in supercar terms). The thought of something that's part GT-R, part R8 and part i8 sounds intriguing, as long as its done right.

#### mr\_pushrod

I'll be interested in 20 years when they're £3x,000!

#### ukpete

As long as someone's replaced the Duracells first.

#### mr\_pushrod

I can't comment on the rest of the world, but in this country people just won't spend £150k on a Honda, no matter how good it is, when they can have a Porsche, Audi or BMW for the same money or less.

#### rlaw22

What'll you all think if it comes close to a seven-minute lap of the Ring? I guess that'll make it a game changer. **JohnMc** 

#### Join the discussion

Keep an eye on evo.co.uk or follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/ evomagazine) to participate in our regular Talking Point debates. The best comments will be published here each month From the forums: community.evo.co.uk/forums

#### Thread of the Month

MattyB\_

#### Worst automotive decision

Mine? Spending £10.5k on a 310bhp 3.7-litre engine for my Alfa 147 GTA after I drove the car into a puddle. The insurance had only given me £6k for the job, so it cost me £4.5k for an extra 50bhp...

My first car. It was only ever going to be a Mk2 Escort. I had ideas of travelling sideways everywhere, but reality hit when I could only afford to insure a 1.3.

Lovely steering and gearbox, but stupidly soft suspension, next to no power, and I discovered both main chassis rails were completely rusted through after a few months. Bugger.

Spending £27k on a TVR Cerbera that was off the road more than it was on. \_*Mick\_N* 

I traded my mint AX GT in for a Honda Accord Aerodeck. It weighed about double and was dead slow. It did have pop-up lights, though, so that was a box ticked.

#### Gavin

Replacing my XR4x4 2.9 with a Mk2 Golf 1.6 CL in a moment of being sensible.

#### Brian\_the\_Snail

Putting a manual gearbox with a weak clutch in a Pontiac Firebird with a 454ci engine.

#### exiges

The E39 530i, as I suspect the wiring had been done by MacGyver with paperclips and chewing gum wrappers.

#### Jimmy Choo

Saxo VTR clown car. Engine fell off the mounts. Whole front end fell off. Erratic handling. Great fun. Lost a fortune.

#### Si

Rejecting my B5 RS4 because of the bendy rims. I should have just bought the Sportec rims for it.

#### Philomena Cunk

Selling the MkI Golf. I should have mothballed it and rebuilt it when I had some time

#### GraniteV8

Selling my (in order of regret) 993 RS, 964 RS and Maserati Racing.

#### Bryn\_P

Selling my Lamborghini Silhouette [pictured] was one of the stupidest things I have ever done. Selling the Countach was one of the stupidest things anyone has ever done.

#### JonathanE

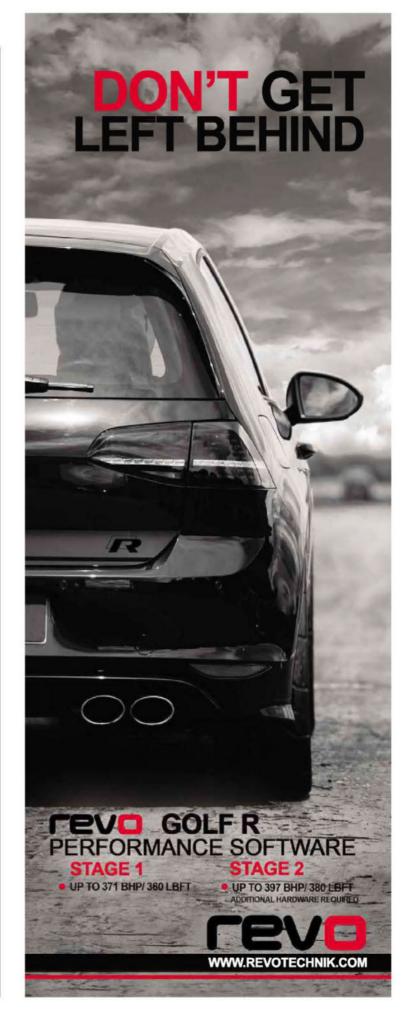


## Thread of the Month wins a Road Angel safety camera & blackspot alert device worth £159.99



The originator of the best **evo** forum thread wins a Road Angel Gem+. The Gem+ automatically updates its camera database as you drive and allows users to share the locations of 'live' camera vans.

#### ROAD ANGEL



# 2015 YEAR OF THE

It's a cracking year for new hot hatches.

To celebrate, we're testing the biggest players and looking back fondly at past heroes

p69	p74	p76	p92
Fiesta ST v	Rising values	Ford Focus	Mk1 Ford
Peugeot 208	of classic hot	ST tackles its	Focus RS
GTI 30th	hatches	major rivals	road trip
p98	p100	p102	p104
Inside the	New Audi RS3	New Honda	Hot hatch to
new Ford	driven in the	Civic Type R	hyperhatch –
Focus RS	Arctic	revealed	the evolution

There's a rumour that with the 208 GTi 30th Anniversary, Peugeot may have rediscovered its hot hatch mojo. We pitch it against the exceptional Fiesta ST to see if that's really true

by DAN PROSSER
PHOTOGRAPHY by
DREW GIBSON

HEN TWO CARS ARE ALL but inseparable over the duration of a twin test, it takes a moment of inspiration for a victor to emerge. This particular contest – Peugeot 208 GTi 30th Anniversary meets Ford Fiesta ST – was charging headfirst towards a dead heat and a bottled verdict, but then one of them went 2.5 seconds quicker than the other around the Bedford Autodrome's South Circuit. For reasons that will be explained later, that sealed the outcome.

The predatory ST has been far and away the best car in the small hot hatch class since it arrived in 2013, but when we first drove this limited edition 208 GTi late last year (**evo** 205) we were reminded that nothing is sacred. Despite being no more than a bit part player in the hot hatch game for two decades – having once dominated the category, let's not forget – Peugeot had turned around a rude little fighter that made us sit up and take notice.

that made us sit up and take notice.

These are serious performance cars in two-thirds scale. On occasion – over the roughest of road surfaces, for instance – you'd swear their damper fluid had frozen solid. They do crash and rattle through town just as they bounce from one bump to another on motorways, demanding a certain level of patience and understanding from their drivers. The trade-off, of course, is that

when the road opens up they are both utterly spectacular. They drip with dynamic ability, but they also return a level of on-road performance that is, in this day and age, perfectly aligned with opportunity to drive quickly in the UK. This is now the sweet spot.

For all the difficulty we had in finding a margin between these two on the road, they actually traverse a stretch of blacktop in very different ways and with their own particular strengths and shortcomings. Although they ride firmly, both cars seem to release a little tension just when you want them to; just at the point when you need the chassis to breathe over a bumpy road rather than skip along it, they both relax.

It's after this point that the trading of blows begins. The Fiesta feels as firmly sprung as the 208, but it leans more in corners, which actually contributes to its sense of flow; the driver can use that degree of lean to judge the grip across the outer edge of the car. The Peugeot, always the flatter of the two, responds by simply finding more grip. Its Michelin Pilot Super Sports just squeeze more purchase out of the surface than our Ford long-termer's Continental Sport Contacts (the OE tyres are Bridgestone Potenzas, but we've found the Contis to be grippier).

The 208 30th also claws out more traction thanks entirely to its limited-slip differential





Above: 208 GTi is able to exploit its power advantage thanks to its standard LSD. Far right: Fiesta ST remains great entertainment but lacks the Peugeot's body control through demanding sequences of corners

The list of benefits of having an LSD up front is so long and varied that this oily metal lump becomes the very centrepiece of the car's dynamic make-up. Beyond traction at corner exit, it also allows the driver to tighten a line under power rather than having to back out of the throttle; it serves as a 'get out of jail free' card when the driver inevitably misjudges a corner radius; and it also means the car works its electronic stability systems an awful lot less than its rival does. In more prosaic terms, it also makes the car more fun to drive - keeping your right peg buried into and through a corner as the diff hooks up and the rear end does as it wishes is absolutely one of the most wonderful sensations in front-wheel-drive motoring.

So the Ford doesn't have a locking differential to lean on, but it does have marginally the more direct and feelsome steering (and a conventionally sized steering wheel, which is always a welcome relief after time behind the Peugeot's tiny offering) and far and away the more satisfying gearshift.

All of which means the two can hardly be

separated as fast road cars. They are equally superb, albeit for quite different reasons, but the narrative takes a turn on the Bedford Autodrome's South Circuit. It packs a wicked mix of low-speed twisters, medium-speed sweepers and high-speed nerve-wrackers into its 1.4 miles. For one of these cars to be 2.5 seconds quicker than the other is really very impressive indeed. Extrapolated over a full Grand Prix circuit, that advantage would doubtless be five seconds or more. If you haven't yet worked out which was the faster car, go and recite 'I will not underestimate the modern sporting Peugeot' 50 times by way of penance.

The 208 has a very slight straight-line performance advantage - it is, after all, 26bhp more powerful than the Fiesta (205bhp plays 179) - but it's the differential that makes the difference in terms of terminal velocity. The Peugeot simply gets away from the slower corners quicker, not least because its diff allows the driver to get back on the power sooner. The 208 also gains an advantage on turn-in, because its track-biased Michelins find













'The two can hardly be separated as fast road cars'













Above: both cars revive the art of lift-off oversteer, but in a more predictable form than, say, Peugeots of old. Left: ST (top) has the better gearchange, the more expensive Peugeot a more lavishly appointed cabin

# 'Both are so agile and tweakable mid-corner'

enormous bite on the way into corners, and they maintain that purchase beyond the apex. The Fiesta, by contrast, will slip into understeer sooner and so won't carry the same corner speed.

In the high-speed direction change at the chicane, where you can't have too much body control as the track flicks from left to right, the Peugeot remains stable and controlled while the Ford stumbles a little. That extra degree of roll, so useful on the road, becomes a lack of precision on the circuit. Where the Fiesta steals back some honour on the 208 is in its adjustability. In fact, both cars are so superbly agile and tweakable mid-corner that you wonder at the need for rear-wheel-drive cars at all (briefly). That not only allows you to enter corners at enormous speeds and at unusual angles of approach, but there are also certain occasions when the rate of yaw, vehicle speed and the corner radius all converge to give an impression of cornering on castor wheels. It's impossible to overstate how brilliant that feels. But while the Ford has a natural, exploitable level of off-throttle agility built into the chassis, the Peugeot instead feels artificially oversteery because of its very stiff rear axle. The 208 is gratuitous in this sense, while the Fiesta is intuitive.

But lap times don't decide evo twin tests. For one thing, road cars should be judged by their on-road performance, and for another outright speed around a circuit is less important than fun and engagement. But in this exceptional instance, where no margin could otherwise be found between them, it is the Peugeot's vastly quicker lap time that proves to be the difference. The 208 GTi 30th Anniversary doesn't beat the Fiesta ST because it's quicker on circuit, though; it's quicker on circuit because it's that much more focused, that much more aggressive than the Ford, and that's why it wins on this occasion.

At this juncture, it should be noted that the 208 GTi 30th costs close to £5000 more than the entrylevel Fiesta ST. There's also the Mountune version of the Ford to consider, which for another £599 (plus fitting) gets you an extra 33bhp, taking the total to 212bhp, 7bhp up on the Peugeot. A Mountuneequipped car wasn't available for our test, but we doubt the extra power would have swung it, not without a limited-slip diff. Perhaps what's needed is a full-on Fiesta RS to administer a smarting backhand to those gloating chaps at Peugeot and reclaim the small hot hatch crown for Ford.

#### Lap times

Peugeot 208 GTI 30th	1:08.3
Ford Fiesta ST	1:10.8

#### PEUGEOT 208 GTI 30th

Engine In-line four-cyl, 1598cc, turbo

CO2 125g/km

Power 205bhp @ 5800rpm **Torque** 221lb ft @ 1750rpm

Transmission Six-speed manual gearbox, front-

wheel drive. limited-slip differential

Front suspension Pseudo MacPherson struts, coil

springs, dampers, anti-roll bar

**Rear suspension** Trailing arms, coil springs,

dampers, anti-roll bar

Brakes Ventilated 323mm discs front, solid 249mm

discs rear, ABS, EBD

Wheels 7.5 x 18in front and rear Tyres 205/40 ZR18 front and rear

Weight (kerb) 1185kg Power-to-weight 176bhp/ton **0-62mph** 6.5sec (claimed) **Top speed** 143mph (claimed) Basic price £21,995 On sale Now

evo rating: ★★★★

#### **FORD** FIESTA ST

Engine In-line four-cyl, 1596cc, turbo

CO2 138g/km

**Power** 179bhp @ 5700rpm Torque 214lb ft @ 1600-5000rpm

**Transmission** Six-speed manual gearbox, front-

wheel drive, eTVC, ESC

Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs,

dampers, anti-roll bar

**Rear suspension** Twist beam, coil springs.

dampers, anti-roll bar

Brakes Ventilated 278mm discs front, solid 253mm

discs rear, ABS, EBD

Wheels 7 x 17in front and rear Tyres 205/40 R17 front and rear

Weight (kerb) 1088kg

Power-to-weight 167bhp/ton 0-62mph 6.9sec (claimed)

Top speed 137mph (claimed) Basic price £17.395

On sale Now

**evo** rating: ★★★★







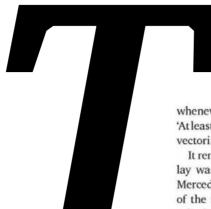


# MAR



The hot hatch class of 2015 is one of the strongest for years. Does a revised Ford Focus ST have what it takes to dismiss its peers and challenge Renault's dominance?

We head to a frosty south Wales to find out...



#### HE INTERNET IS IN MELTDOWN AS OUR

little convoy heads west on freezing roads. Why? Two letters: RS. Yep, the Focus RS is back and it's being unveiled on the very day we're conducting our own little investigation into the current hot hatch hierarchy. You know the details by now (see page 98 if you don't), but they're still drip-feeding through to us

whenever we stop for coffee or fuel and can check social media... 'At least 320bhp.' Nice. 'Four-wheel drive.' Oooooh. 'Dynamic torque vectoring.' Oh yes! We agree it sounds pretty bloody exciting.

It remains to be seen whether the RS can redefine the hot hatch, lay waste to everything from the Golf R to the Audi RS3 and Mercedes A45 AMG, and bring joy to the hearts of the fellowship of the fast Ford. In the meantime there are plenty of plots and sub-plots to enjoy amongst this fascinating, accessible and plain exciting breed, and the new (well, heavily revised) Focus ST is a key player. Over the next couple of days it'll run head-to-head against its rivals, including that other RS. The French one. It should give us a taste of Ford's current form, remind us just how perfect a match a good hot hatch and a bad British B-road really are, and show that you don't need four-wheel drive and nearly 350bhp to have fun.

The new ST isn't a headline-grabber like the RS. The new look is a little less gawky, the 2-litre four-cylinder turbocharged EcoBoost engine still produces 247bhp at 5500rpm, and the torque figure of 265lb ft is the same but starts a fraction later, at 2000rpm rather than 1750. Ford claims 0-62mph in 6.5 seconds and a top speed



# 'The new Focus ST should remind us just how perfect a match a good hot hatch and a bad British B-road really are'





of 154mph. Other changes include a revised setup for the electric power steering, new front springs and firmer damping all round, revised Electronic Torque Vectoring Control (brake activated), a reprogrammed ESP system and Michelin Pilot Sport 3 tyres for the optional 19in wheels. Team RS handled all the work, incidentally. Notable omissions? Well, the biggy is a mechanical limited-slip differential. With the temperature not threatening to get much above freezing, we'll soon discover if that's a fatal flaw.

Against the Focus is a disparate bunch, from the relatively tame Kia Proceed GT that's impressed the whole team as part of our Fast Fleet of late, to the resolutely hardcore Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy. In between lies the five-door Mini Cooper S, Volkswagen's Golf GTI, the Vauxhall Astra VXR and the SEAT Leon Cupra 280. In terms of power, price and intent, the ST (available from £22,195 but here represented in ST2 trim at £25,995) sits just about in the middle. However, we know from the fabulous Fiesta ST that Ford has an uncanny knack of making so-so on-paper technical specifications sparkle out on real roads. Before this thorough facelift the Focus ST wasn't possessed of its little brother's infectious enthusiasm and sweet balance, but we're hoping that this time the same magic is somewhere underneath that very orange paintwork...

**WELL, THIS IS NEW. CARS WARMED THROUGH AND** ice scraped from windscreens, I find myself in a Kia. On an **evo** cover story. Stranger things might have happened at sea, but

certainly not on the roads over the Brecon Beacons. Stranger still, it's pretty darn good. In fact it drives largely as it looks – sharp, uncomplicated and more than a little surprising. The good vibes begin the moment you sit behind the wheel. The interior doesn't exactly have the VW feel-good factor, but it's neat, clear and seems pretty high quality. The TFT screen with a central speedo flanked by a red turbo boost graphic and a blue torque read-out is a real treat, too. Better yet, the low driving position is excellent and the thin-rimmed steering wheel feels really good to hold. The Proceed doesn't compete just with a low price these days – at £20,200 it's actually more expensive than the Cooper S, and you can see why Kia has that confidence.

The roads are treacherous but the GT is a nice way to feel my way into the conditions. The steering is light but has a really nice rate of response, and although the car's dimensions are only marginally smaller than the Focus's, it feels considerably more compact – almost like it's been designed to fill the slot between the Fiesta and Focus classes. The GT's 1.6-litre turbocharged engine is well off the pace in the hot hatch arms race with just 201bhp at 6000rpm and 195lb ft from 1750rpm, but with cold, dense air to chew on it feels keen and doesn't instantly fall away from the cars ahead.

Climbing away from Crickhowell and up onto our photography route, the GT continues to impress. It doesn't have the rabid turnin of the more hardcore hatches, but in this weather the measured approach is reassuring and effective. However, with no limited-slip differential the Kia does require persuasion rather than coercion







if you're not to overload the front tyres and end up with messy wheelspin and understeer. If you carry too much speed and then get too eager with the power, the limitations of the front end are easy to discover. Better to smoothly guide it into corners, use the natural tendency for the rear of the car to adopt a little attitude, then gradually load-up the front tyres with the available torque.

Driven like that, the Kia is actually very satisfying – just pointy enough not to frustrate, and the rear axle's keenness to help steer the car is really well judged. It's no heart-in-mouth lift-off oversteer machine but it does feel agile, and although the stability control system never fully disengages, it allows enough slip to let you feel the GT working beyond the limits of the tyres. Only poor wheel control over bad surfaces and the loose, clattery feel that emanates up through the steering wheel give serious cause for complaint. Overall, the GT has a slightly old-fashioned feel but a real honesty, and although it's not wildly fast, it's a convincing effort. I doubt it's about to topple the Trophy, but its inclusion is definitely justified.

By the time we reach our base for the day, the cars are sprayed with salt and grime and, to my eyes, look fantastic. I'm naturally drawn to the faster, more extreme cars, but maybe I'll wait for the temperature to creep up above zero first. The Mégane is wearing the optional Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres and, by the look on road test editor Prosser's face, it's a bit frisky with frost on the ground. 'That thing would be too extreme for a lot of people,' he says and then puffs out his cheeks in relief. Further down the scale, the Mini has impressed Mission Motorsport founder and friend of evo Jim Cameron. He's been waiting for us for some time, having driven across to Wales this morning. Somebody had told him to meet at 8.30am and he forgot to add the obligatory hour (or two) that's always lost to the gods of faffing on an evo shoot. You can take the man out of the military...

'It's a nice thing, the Mini,' Jim begins, 'just as a place to be this morning. I know the interior gets criticised by some for being a bit gimmicky, but I'd rather that than just really dull. Oh, it's quick and pretty good fun, too.' Of course, the very best thing about being inside the Mini is that you can't see what it looks like from the outside. It is a weird, ungainly looking car in five-door form, isn't it?

Even so, settling into the Cooper S my expectations are high. I've always been a fan of the pointy, almost darty feel of quick Minis and their ability to cover ground at great speed and in a slightly crazed way. Despite the cartoon-like aesthetic, they have always felt pretty uncompromising - stiff ride, super-alert controls, a bit of torque-steer and an overriding enthusiasm to be grabbed by the scruff and chucked at the scenery. Straightaway the five-door fits

> **Left:** with 189bhp, the Mini is the least potent of the seven cars here, but it makes its power count with a stiff chassis and responsive controls. Above: SEAT's Leon Cupra 280, meanwhile, boasts a healthy 276bhp and is a genuine contender for the overall win



the mould. Certainly the ride has improved with this latest, F56generation car, and the 72mm longer wheelbase of the five-door calms the initial response to the steering, but it's only by degrees. After the Kia it feels hyper-alert and the steering speed requires time to acclimatise to. At 1220kg the Cooper S makes really good use of its 2-litre turbocharged engine and it feels stronger than the quoted figures of 189bhp and 206lb ft might suggest.

Like the GT, the Mini also feels pretty compact (yes, I know it's a BIG Mini), helped by its flat side windows and upright windscreen, which allow you to place the car with millimetre accuracy. Everything feels pretty promising and, like in all Minis, you can stomp across the ground at a serious lick. Throttle response and steering weight can be altered between Green, Mid and Sport modes, the extra weight in Sport working well in these slimy conditions and not falling into the trap of confusing ridiculous weight with feel. Sadly, it's mated to throttle response that's just too harsh. With no locking diff and peak torque from 1250rpm, the Cooper S is very tricky to drive smoothly in Sport - the gentlest prod of throttle running into the traction control instantly. There's a midway Dynamic Traction Control setting, which works well, but you do feel rather too reliant on the system. Turn it off altogether and the initial turn-in accuracy isn't backed up mid-corner. Instead you get sudden understeer and lots of wheelspin.

It's a shame because the Mini gets some stuff really right. The brakes have superb feel, the engine sounds great (although power tails off noticeably over 6000rpm), the six-speed manual can be thrown around at will, and the car's behaviour in the turn-in phase is really exciting. On warmer, drier roads I suspect it'd feel more polished, but these conditions do highlight its limitations. For me, some of the agility of the three-door is eroded and, more than that, some of the control has gone, too. It's still a fun car to hustle along, but just occasionally the weight floats away from the dampers and then soon after the wheels dissolve into wheelspin. The tension that at first seems so convincing lacks a really steely core.

I feel I'm being a little harsh on the Mini, until I step into the Cupra. Holy hell this thing is rapid. And aggressive. And just properly focused. I'd expected a contrast with the Kia and Mini, but quite how big a step up this car is in every way is a surprise. Of





Left: Pilot Sport Cup 2-shod Mégane is frisky on cold tarmac but devastatingly fast in the right hands. Below: Focus ST is 29bhp down on the Leon, but it's the disparity in chassis control that's most noticeable on our test route

course, the spec sheet tells some of that story. The Cupra 280 costs from £27,210 and produces 276bhp at 6000rpm and 258lb ft from 1750 to 5300rpm. It's good for 0-62mph in 5.8sec when equipped with the manual gearbox (a tenth quicker with DSG), and 155mph. Those numbers don't convey just how fast the SEAT is, though. Compared with the Mini it's just on another planet - much more grip, considerably better traction and a top-end power delivery that rips into the limiter where the Mini would be breathlessly asking for another gear. It feels like I've just stepped up a couple of classes, or maybe fast-forwarded half a decade in development terms.

Beyond the shock of the Cupra's performance is some real quality. The damping is really impressive, giving excellent body control and deftly riding over nasty surfaces that would have the Kia rattling and the Mini hopping off line. Sometimes the front axle does struggle to deal with full acceleration and rapid-fire bumps, and you feel its pain through the steering column shimmying lightly in your hands. Even so, the degree of control and agility is very good indeed. Everything just feels properly located, taut and precise. It should be said that on these roads the suspension in Cupra mode is too harsh and can make the surface feel almost corrugated, but Individual mode allows you to back off the suspension but still have the most aggressive diff setting and the heavier steering option. The steering in that setting is perhaps a shade too sticky, but it beats the too-light Sport option and fits the car's muscular feel, which infects everything from the damping to the brake pedal.

If you like your hatches very, very pointy and with a light rear end always on the edge of oversteer, the Cupra probably isn't for you. However, I like its stability and there's just enough adjustability to trim any mid-corner understeer. This is a controversial thing to say, but I wonder if some front-drivers are getting too oversteery at the moment. I think engineers are sick of journalists moaning about understeer and have maybe gone too far the other way. Oh god, I might get the sack for saying that... Anyway, the Cupra's compromise is very good indeed and although the diff doesn't quite deliver the total traction you might expect, much of that is to do with the fierceness of the engine. It's worth noting that this Cupra 280 feels particularly feisty. We've got our DSG-equipped five-door long-termer along on this test as a camera car and back-to-back the test car definitely has more fire.

I'm not alone in my love of the SEAT's attitude and the way it rips across this moor. 'Unbelievable engine,' says Dan, 'just so much more serious than some of the other stuff here. Shows how far the hot hatch has come.' It's also a pretty good benchmark for the ST that I find myself climbing into with fingers crossed. I thought









the last ST a bit of a disappointment when you consider Ford's hot hatch tradition, and the Cupra has shown that this new version needs to be a big step up to compete. It's out-punched by the SEAT but hopefully not out-manoeuvred.

One thing's for sure, the EcoBoost engine might be down a little on power but it's not lacking in character or response and it sounds superb. Noise is piped into the cabin and somewhere between the engine bay and your ears it seems to find another cylinder. The deep, warbly note is very reminiscent of the old five-cylinder ST's, and although there might be a bit of fakery involved, the result is undeniably appealing - especially as the distinctive gargling is backed by a thumping delivery. Perhaps the 2-litre turbocharged engine lacks the frenzied feel of the SEAT's, but it's not far behind and it certainly gives the front wheels something to think about.

In fact, it gives them a huge headache. The new steering setup might be more incisive but it's still corrupted by quite severe torquesteer, and if the wheel isn't tugging around in your hands then the front Pilot Sport 3s are spinning up, overwhelmed by the power. Dial back your expectations and the ST improves and shows good balance, a level of adjustability beyond what the Cupra can offer, and makes solid progress. If that sounds like damning with faint praise then I'm probably giving the right impression. The ST is good in parts - chiefly the engine - but the dynamism shot through the Fiesta ST is absent. The ride is firm and constantly busy, the torquesteer comes at you in the mid-range - even in third and fourth gear - and the gearbox's shift is long and slightly mushy. Although the ST likes to slip and slide at the rear, for every deliciously balanced moment there are four of five more when the front just washes into clumsy understeer. I've read many good things about the ST but on these roads and in this company it just never sparkles.

I have to say I'm a bit shocked that the Focus feels a little podgy and reluctant, but the Golf GTI proves instantly that ploughing a slightly less manic groove than the Cupra or Mégane doesn't have to compromise dynamic cohesion. It simply flows where the Focus weaves left and right and heaves on its suspension, and even without the Performance Pack fitted (which brings a 10bhp boost up to 227bhp, a limited-slip differential and bigger front brakes), the marriage of drivetrain and chassis feel spot-on. Compared with the rippling aggression of the Cupra, the GTI is altogether calmer. There's more suspension travel and suppleness, the steering is heavier and acts on a calmer front end, and the gearshift is lighter and sweeter to use. This might all sound a bit 'safe', but the reality is that it's supremely satisfying and the Golf's balance is actually very playful indeed, more easily inducing oversteer than the Cupra and always shifting its movements in line with your instructions.

There are some disappointments, though. Firstly, you can't play that creamy balance with freedom because the stability control is never truly off and comes in with a bang if you're having too much fun. And once again it's the lack of a limited-slip differential that causes issues on corner exit. The Golf might only have 217bhp but there's plenty of torque, and the Cupra-matching 258lb ft quickly gets the better of the front tyres. Then the nose pushes wide and the composure just ebbs away. If you're buying a Golf GTI be sure to tick the box marked 'Performance Package' - it's £995 well spent. But setting aside the traction issues thrown up on these slippery roads, even this basic GTI is a very good thing indeed. The ST could learn a lot from this car.

If the ST should be taking notes from the GTI then the Focus RS team might want to have a quick go in a Mégane 275 Trophy in the coming weeks. Front-wheel drive it may be, but the Trophy's



damping, traction, precision and single-mindedness create an extraordinary driving experience. Just sitting in the thin Recaro seat and holding the Alcantara steering wheel imparts a sense of specialness. And the moment the optional 19-inch Speedline Turinis start to turn, the quality of the experience is sky-high. The also-optional adjustable Öhlins dampers offer supreme control and the steering is perfectly weighted and offers a real sense of feel, despite being an electric system. In fact the whole car just zings with feedback. You feel completely locked into the experience.

On cold Cup 2s it's a real handful, though. In fact the first few miles are like driving a racer on stone-cold slicks. If you attempt to drive even at half speed through a corner, the Trophy either slides wide at the front or snaps suddenly into big, scary oversteer. Even with the stability systems left on, it feels grumpy and very edgy indeed. Dan was right when he said that most people might find it a bit, um, terrifying. With temperature comes reassurance and slowly but surely the Mégane gets into its operating window. And once you get it in that zone it's just devastating.

Where it elevates itself above the competition is its absolute

refusal to lose composure. The engine doesn't feel as explosive as the Cupra's, but the front axle deals with everything it can give (271bhp and 265lb ft), even out of hairpin corners. There's no torque-steer, no wheelspin, just instant, reassuring bite. The brakes are also superb, not just in terms of feel but because you can avoid triggering the ABS so much more effectively than in the other cars. Even if you do get the pedal juddering, the car stays planted, unlike, say, the Mini, which gets upset as brake force is juggled around. All of these ingredients give you the freedom to really jump on the car – brake late, turn in hard, keep the engine roaring away through its Akrapovic exhaust and carry speed. It feels indomitable.

Our road route is relatively short and starts out barely a car-and-a-half wide, bumpy and blind, so you can't test the grip levels but instead marvel at the damping. Then, as it opens out and you start to push, the Mégane just ups its game accordingly. The traction really is amazing, then through high-speed corners barely a few degrees of lock is required for the Trophy to whistle through, front tyres nailed, rear teetering on the edge of oversteer. I'd say the balance of this particular car is a little too aggressive and its love of turn-in





**Left:** regular Golf GTI – as tested here – has 217bhp; optional Performance Pack boosts that to 227bhp and adds a limited-slip diff. **Below:** the view through the

office window as Bovingdon braces for torque-steer



'Few hot hatches would stay with the Mégane here, but the Astra VXR hangs on gamely'







'The ST lacks the traction of the best cars here, and the torque-steer and scrappiness when pushed are disappointing'

Left: stealthy Kia thoroughly deserves its place amongst this vivid collection of hot hatches. Top right: Vauxhall VXR shows huge mid-corner stability, but you can overcome it...





oversteer in third- and fourth-gear sweepers is an acquired taste to say the least, but the precision and feedback streaming through every control allows you to stay on top of it. Just. I'm sure a little bit of damper tweaking could dumb down the balance for those of us not trying to get every last tenth from a lap of the Nürburgring.

Few hot hatches would stay with the Mégane on a road like this, but the Astra VXR, which has 276bhp and 295lb ft, hangs on gamely. It's the polar opposite of the Mégane in some ways. The innate rightness writ large in the Renault's every move is replaced by disconcertingly artificial feedback in the Vauxhall. The steering is much worse than I remember, being super-fast but light and devoid of feel; the huge oblong gearlever feels all wrong; and although the engine rips through the mid-range, it stutters at the top end and then there's an odd delay when you hit an upshift and reapply power before anything really happens. The balance is also wildly different. This car is about mid-corner stability, not adjustability. But when you discover how secure it is, push out of your comfort zone and trust the car rather than search for messages in the mute steering, it carries lots and lots of speed. In fact, in the quicker corners it's excellent, absolutely rock solid.

Where the Vauxhall falls down, above and beyond even the weirdly rubbish steering (remember that the VXR is very proud of its hydraulic rack, whereas other Astras have an electric setup), is that it starts to feel heavy as the road crumples up under its wheels. On crests that the Cupra would leap over, wheels spinning, then land and hook up instantly, the VXR thumps into its bumpstops and wobbles back to neutral some time later. At 1475kg it's a chunky car and up here the weight is a handicap it just can't quite overcome. Even so, it's fast, sounds great, looks really classy in deep Emerald

Green and wins more plaudits than most of us expected. Tomorrow, the cars have an appointment with a racetrack and a stopwatch the Astra doesn't look at all concerned...

#### On track

Bedford Autodrome's South Circuit is, fortuitously, bathed in sunshine on another freezing cold but glorious day when we roll in to set some lap times. There's one damp corner (a tight secondgear right-hander), but we should get pretty representative times. It's a really testing track with a fearsomely fast chicane and then a  $\it just\mbox{-}flat\mbox{-}in\mbox{-}fourth\,left\mbox{-}hander, a couple of tricky third\mbox{-}gear\,lefts\,and$ then the tight section to finish. However, two very long straights mean traction and power are just as important as agility.

The Kia, then, is unlikely to set the world on fire. Again it's a great car in which to get a feel for the conditions, though. The engine feels breathless but everything else is really positive. The brakes last a good six or seven fast laps and the balance is really enjoyable. As on the road, there's just enough turn-in adjustability to kill understeer and carry speed right into the apex. It sets a benchmark of 1:11.8 and continues its quietly impressive display.

The Mini is unquestionably faster in a straight line, hitting 111.9mph during its lap to the GT's 109.2. However, its gearbox can't be rushed on downshifts and the car feels taller and slightly less in control of its mass. Even so, it's secure through the fast stuff and the traction is just about good enough to make the most of its torquey power delivery. The brakes go off quickly, though, as do the front tyres, but not before it's set a time of 1:10.8. Given the choice, though, I think the Kia is the more natural trackday hatch.



The Focus ST is faster still. It sets a 1:09.8 and flies along the straight, hitting 116.9mph before braking into the tight left-right complex. But it's a wild ride. Through the fast chicane it's right on the edge of oversteer and through the following left it snaps sideways at 72mph. Yikes. Traction is also at a premium and the sense that the ST isn't fully resolved seems to come into sharp focus.

Unfortunately the Golf GTI is unable to join us at Bedford, but without that limited-slip differential it's unlikely that it would trouble our last three contenders. The Renault, SEAT and Vauxhall are closely matched on paper, save for the Mégane's tyre advantage - it runs Michelin Cup 2s to the VXR's Pilot Super Sports and the Cupra's Bridgestone Potenzas. The Astra is a real surprise. It's another world to those that have gone before and is nailed-on through the fast corners. There's none of the edginess of the Focus and traction is much, much better thanks to its Drexler limitedslip diff. It's a really easy car in which to be consistent and extract the optimum lap. The SEAT is trickier, and like the ST falls into oversteer through that dangerous near-flat left at close to threefigure speeds, but it's mega through the fast chicane and just hauls along the straights. It moves around in the heavy braking zone into the tight complex but then again it does hit 121.6mph on the preceding straight... The VXR and Cupra trade tenths here and there but it's the straight-line edge that finally sees the SEAT take a narrow victory. The Astra clocks a 1:07.1 and the Leon a 1:07.0.

The Mégane, I reason, should monster it, and the VBOX's predictive lap timer suggests it might. Over the start-finish line it immediately falls a couple of tenths behind the Cupra, but then through the chicane and that fast left it claws that back and more.

By the time we reach the back straight we're over five tenths up and it drives out of the corner so much better. So far it's been properly edgy through the quick stuff – this car is a real oversteerer – but the grip and stability under braking take acres of time out of the Cupra. But it's all for nothing as, on the straight, that half-second advantage diminishes and becomes a deficit of a couple of tenths by the time I hit the brakes.

The Renault exhibits superb stability and quite phenomenal traction again – getting the advantage up to around half a second once more before the final hairpin left. Now it's a drag race and the virtual Cupra starts to close in... The advantage tumbles at an alarming rate and the Mégane crosses the line in 1:06.9. A win then, but by the slimmest of margins – 0.1sec – and it took a lot of holding on to in order to beat the SEAT. The Cupra really is a rocketship and this circuit played perfectly to its strengths.

#### Conclusion

You won't be surprised to learn that the Focus ST doesn't win this test. Not even close. Aside from its excellent engine, it's found wanting in too many areas. It lacks the traction of the best cars here, which you might expect given that it goes without a limited-slip diff, but the torque-steer and scrappiness when pushed are disappointing. Where's the fun and deft control of the Fiesta ST? I hadn't expected the Focus to be as sharp and determined as the Mégane in light of its more rounded brief, but that the Golf so comprehensively outshines the Ford is the real story here.

Or maybe it's that the Kia hangs together on tough roads and



#### **FORD FOCUS ST**

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1999cc, turbo Power 247bhp @ 5500rpm **Torque** 265lb ft @ 2000-4500rpm

Weight 1362kg

Power-to-weight 184bhp/ton 0-62mph 6.5sec (claimed) Top speed 154mph (claimed) Basic price £22,195

**evo** rating: ★★★☆

#### MINI COOPERS 5-DOOR

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1988cc, turbo Power 189bhp @ 4700-6000rpm Torque 206lb ft @ 1250rpm Weight 1220kg

Power-to-weight 148bhp/ton 0-62mph 6.9sec (claimed)

**Top speed** 144mph (claimed) Basic price £19.255

**evo** rating: ★★★☆

#### SEAT **LEON CUPRA 280**

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbo Power 276bhp @ 6000rpm Torque 258lb ft @ 1750-5300rpm

Weight 1320kg

Power-to-weight 212bhp/ton 0-62mph 5.8sec (claimed) Top speed 155mph (limited) Basic price £27,210

**evo** rating: ★★★★

#### **VOLKSWAGEN** GOLF GTI

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbo Power 217bhp @ 4700-6200rpm Torque 258lb ft @ 1500-4600rpm

Weight 1351kg

Power-to-weight 163bhp/ton 0-62mph 6.5sec (claimed) Top speed 155mph (limited) Basic price £26,580

**evo** rating: ★★★★

#### KIA PROCEED GT

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1591cc, turbo **Power** 201bhp @ 6000rpm **Torque** 195lb ft @ 1750-4500rpm

Weight 1448kg

Power-to-weight 143bhp/ton 0-62mph 7.4sec (claimed) Top speed 143mph (limited) Basic price £20,200

**evo** rating: ★★★★☆

#### RENAULTSPORT MÉGANE 275 TROPHY

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo Power 271bhp @ 5500rpm Torque 265lb ft @ 3000-5000rpm **Weight** 1376kg Power-to-weight 200bhp/ton 0-62mph 6.0sec (claimed) **Top speed** 158mph (claimed)

**evo** rating: ★★★★★

Basic price £28.930

#### VAUXHALL **ASTRA VXR**

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo Power 276bhp @ 5500rpm **Torque** 295lb ft @ 2500-4500rpm Weight 1475kg

Power-to-weight 190bhp/ton 0-62mph 6.0sec (claimed) Top speed 155mph (limited) Basic price £27,315

**evo** rating: ★★★★☆

Above right: Renault's hot hatch roll continues as the Mégane Trophy waltzes off with the win. Left: South Wales, and specifically the Black Mountains, is a regular evo test haunt for obvious reasons



# 'Each element in the Mégane is perfectly matched to the next to create a rare harmony'

even on the circuit. Okay, so it's not hugely fast and it lacks the sharpness and control at its outer edges, but overall it's a fun and appealing package. Little details need to be honed but there's the basis of something good here. Can we have a GT RS, please?

The Mini doesn't trouble the top cars, either. The Cooper S remains a pretty cool thing to be in and has a feeling of lightness and agility that's all-pervasive in normal driving. That gives it real appeal. However, it doesn't quite deliver if you ask for more. There's plenty of initial response but not enough substance behind it. Not in the context of cars as capable as the Golf or, at the more extreme end, the Cupra and Trophy.

The VXR is similarly undone by the strength of the competition and because it lacks polish in the detail. The steering, be it in Normal, Sport or VXR mode, is completely inert and yet hyperresponsive – a disconcerting combination. The engine sounds angry and the performance is strong, but the mapping is odd, especially the prolonged stutter when you put in a full-rev upshift. Eventually the car's weight starts to tell and beyond broad-shouldered grip you find little in the way of subtlety or nuance.

The SEAT and Renault, such fierce competitors in the front-drive war at the Nürburgring, bring a level of excitement and focus that none of the others can match. The Cupra is fast and agile and it's a real buzz to thread along a road, as the engine almost feels too much for the chassis. The Renault takes a different approach - each element perfectly matched to the next to create a whole that has a rare harmony and quite extraordinary reserves of composure. In short, it's still The One. If the Focus RS can eventually go beyond the Trophy, it'll be a truly special car. Your move, Ford. ■



# COLOGNE

by RICHARD LANE

PHOTOGRAPHY by OLGUN KORDAL





# RANGER

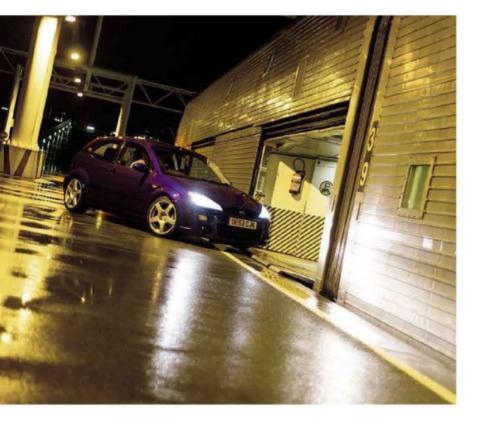
Flying to Cologne to lay eyes on the new Focus RS is undoubtedly the right option at this time of year. But then we wouldn't have yet another opportunity to the get to the bottom of the car that established fast Fords for the 21st century



**Left:** rural Belgian fuel stations are averse to Visa, it seems, as Lane's plastic is rejected for the third time. **Below left:** later cars gained an 'engine start' graphic to avoid confusion







'DESPITE LACKING THE STARDUST OF HOMOLOGATION, RALLYING IS DEEPLY INGRAINED IN THE Mk1 FOCUS RS' the original Ford Focus RS. Not in the same way it has a problem with, say, the BMW X6M, but a problem nevertheless. We simply cannot make up our minds about it.

Let's recap. Our initial drive and first group test with the RS more than a decade ago yielded a promising four-star verdict. That promise was oh-so short-lived, however, because another Ford-supplied RS subsequently left eCoty 2002 in disgrace – and with a three-star rating – after manically torque-steering around Snowdonia. But later that first score was reinstated with interest, four-and-a-half stars being awarded after we drove a couple of well-behaved owners' cars. Another privately owned car then undid the good work and it was back to three.

To make crystal clear our inability to emphatically evaluate this simple hot hatch, look in the back of any recent issue of **evo** and you'll see that the Mk1 Focus RS has at some point returned to four stars. Very few cars have split expert and enthusiast opinion like it, which is why I'm now sitting in a completely standard example bound for Ford-Werke – the Cologne heart of the Blue Oval's European empire – to coincide with the launch of a potentially thunderous third-generation Focus RS. It's an opportunity to indentify what 'Rallye Sport' means for a modern Ford and to attempt to draw my own conclusions.

Right now, though, I'm waiting for photographer Olgun Kordal on an arctic side road just north of King's Cross, trying to consolidate a more trivial opinion on what's now a fantastically dated interior design. A barrage of blue, a sleazy handbrake lever and brittle plastics wouldn't cut it at Gaydon, but ditch the snobbery and the cabin is clean and intuitive. It being 5.15am, the crescent-shaped Sparcos are also perilously comfy, lined as they are with Alcantara.

Nobody ever disputes this car's understated exterior geometry. The first Focus was always a handsome machine and a bellicose bodykit did it no harm whatsoever. Has there been a prettier hatch since the RS debuted in 2002? Gazing through the dark at beautifully flared arches accommodating a 65mm wider track, and at the deep, dark radiator grille and subtly elongated spoiler, I don't think so. Although the Renault Clio 197 and Alfa's 147 GTA perhaps run it close, neither does 'iron fist in a velvet glove' better.

I'm doubled over checking the tread of some fairly serious 225-section Goodyear Eagle F1s when Olgun rocks up. After helping him shovel aboard several thousand pounds-worth of precious kit, I slide in, prime the ignition and thumb the smooth, sickly green WRC-style start button embedded in the transmission tunnel before depressing it with a satisfying click. The heavily reworked 2-litre turbocharged Duratec engine wakes almost instantly with a bashful bout of revs that ricochets off the red brick of HMP Pentonville, before settling into a simmering burble that's pleasingly rough around the edges but nothing exceptional.

Yet as we sally for Folkestone, this inceptive Focus RS – number 2238 of 4501, to be precise – feels more than a little special. And that's not a sentiment derived from the comedy carbonfibre console lurking in my still slightly blurry

peripheral vision. More the concentrated throttle response, tellingly firm suspension and a vitalising lack of inertia throughout. The car feels strong but lithe – it feels virile. Then again, I might well say that, because I'm its new owner.

#### WITH THE CAR INDUSTRY'S POWER WARS NO

longer centred on supercars or even super-saloons, increasingly performant hot hatches have been arriving in conveyor-belt-style from the likes of the Renaultsport, SEAT and Ford itself during the past decade. The small blind is now 250bhp, while the Germans have obliged others to cough up considerably more if they really want to be taken seriously. In fact, it's been a long time since the car we're in was considered something to beat, which is strange considering just how potent Ford made the Focus when it was chosen to rejuvenate the RS brand.

The spec sheet is simply littered with the names of suppliers entrenched in rallying. An enormous, Porsche Cayman GTS-comparable 325mm in diameter, the vented front discs are from Brembo. Their task is to contain just 1278kg, which explains why the Focus RS stops as quickly as an Alfa 4C. Sachs Racing developed dampers to sit within shortened springs and AP Racing supplied a heavy-duty clutch. The Garrett GT 2560LS turbocharger that develops at least 1.0bar of boost pressure is also custom-built. More noticeable for bystanders are the 18in alloys, which ape Colin McRae's set for tarmac stages and come courtesy of OZ Racing, while Sparco, for better or for worse, was given free rein on the interior. Despite lacking the stardust of homologation, then, rallying is deeply ingrained in the Mk1 Focus RS. All that's missing are circular Hella fog lights.

Admittedly, not a lot of that mattered to me as a drooling 13-year-old when the car was first let loose (to a lukewarm reception from older RS devotees, it must be said, many of whom had placed deposits on the basis that Escort Cosworthstyle four-wheel drive would feature). When the cream of the crop came in the form of Honda's Civic Type R and a chubby Golf R32, what mattered was that the Ford looked sensational and was fast as hell. I adored it. Looking back, that 70 per cent of the components were either new, uprated or re-engineered from standard explains why Ford's accountants probably hated the car. Each example reputedly lost the company £4000, which, conversely, is the kind of man-maths that always goes down exceedingly well on this side of the divide.

It's clear that the RS wasn't designed with motorway miles in mind, but later that morning we're loping effortlessly due southeast from Calais on northern Europe's glass-smooth arterial highways. A sixth ratio for the MTX75 gearbox – which wasn't an ideal transmission and had to be beefed up to handle a healthy 229lb ft – wouldn't go amiss, and might have perhaps helped us creep above 28mpg on this tea-tray-flat run down through Belgium along increasingly snow-flanked autoroutes.

Nevertheless, we're not aiming for Stavelot – our overnight stop – to critique the car's commuting credentials or drinking habits. The Walloon town is famous for the heavy fighting it endured during the Battle of the Bulge and, perhaps more importantly in the context of **evo**, its setting as a gateway to the sacred tarmac of Spa-Francorchamps. It is also encircled by licence-threateningly fast roads, many of which, we will







# 'THERE'S ALMOST INFINITE TRACTION IF YOU CAREFULLY MATCH STEERING ANGLE TO THROTTLE INPUT'











discover, feature the faintly cracked, orange-peel surfacing that supposedly prompts the Mk1 RS to violently veer out of lane as that infamous torque-steer takes root.

Torque-steer: the Focus RS's bête noire. Depending on who you believe, it's conjured either by sub-par tyres, clumsily set-up suspension geometry, or unpublicised modifications to the torque-biasing front differential undertaken by supplier and WRC veteran Quaife, supposedly to endow the car with supernatural grip on a velvet-smooth racetrack.

As it happens, there is torque-steer in this example, but driving almost flat out along the roads within and twisting up to the ethereal Hautes Fagnes marshes that form a plateau above the circuit, it's no fiercer than what the latest Fiesta ST serves up. Whipping the spherical gearknob through first, second and third gears, it's nearly always there to some degree, but what quickly becomes apparent to me is that, like wrestling a tennis ball out of a dog's mouth, the harder you fight, the more aggressive it becomes. Accept that the car will oscillate as the diff hunts for maximum traction, allow the blood to seep back into your knuckles, and the RS nearly always tracks true.

That said, ascending the hairpin-laden and treacherously slippery N68 that flows north from Malmedy, the nose starts tugging more frantically as intermittent wheelspin enters the fray. It's a problem, but a problem you manage; something to sharpen the mind and something to gain satisfaction from driving around. Contrarily, on drier corners the diff starts behaving itself to mesmeric effect. Occasionally it even hits a sweet spot when, surging hard out of a bend right on the limit of adhesion, one's hands can even be removed from the wheel and the car keeps tracking, guided by an unseen force.

Not that you'd want to remove your hands. Legality aside, it's at times like this that you positively revel in the RS's energy and rich torsion. The car's surging enthusiasm can be felt from its source at the contact patch of the front tyres, up the steering rack and through your wrists, past your elbows and ultimately into your shoulder blades, which are being pushed backwards and into either the right or left bolster of the figure-hugging seats. At this point your connection with the car is profound. And the spectre of torque-steer? Couldn't care less.

For split-personality mechanics, then, look no further than Quaife circa 2002, but in the main there's almost infinite traction if you carefully match steering angle to throttle input. Indeed, get it right and it's obvious why this car is loved. To protect the transmission, torque is limited to 170lb ft in the first two gears, but once into third all 229lb ft is yours as the industrious engine hits maximum boost from around 3500rpm, with peak power – a minimum of 212bhp, claimed Ford – arriving at 5500rpm. Now the Rallye Sport Focus, modest on paper by today's standards but far more potent than the figures imply, hits its stride and the conifer-lined verges of Liège's pale forests seem to close in just a little.

It bulldozes these scenic roads with an urgency and contagious excitability that's lacking from so many modern hatches. The sense of mechanical toughness instilled by a costly decision to bring WRC suppliers on board – a trait of older, 'proper' RS cars – is evident, too. Superb compliancy and body control mean none of my attention is diverted from going faster, the car exhibiting a near-perfect blend of rawness, composure, muscle and civility. That said, it's no surprise that roughly three in every four examples are modified; the chassis is practically begging for more power.

The steering isn't the last word in tactility and, at 2.9 turns lock-to-lock, is a little protracted through tight direction

unique bodywork means

hottest Focus stands

out a mile next to

standard models

changes. Despite a short-shift being standard equipment, the act of swapping cogs lacks some intensity, too. Worst of all, I'm wondering how in god's name such an assiduously engineered performance car was signed off with so elevated a driving position! That's it, though, and a perceptible lack of weight and flexible, uninterrupted power delivery more than make up for these essentially minor flaws as we hurtle through the frozen Belgian bush towards our stop for the night.

#### THE NEXT MORNING IT'S SOGGY, WHICH ISN'T

in the script. Bundesautobahn 4 splits Germany north-south, dividing the country almost perfectly in two. Most of its 364 miles of circuit-worthy tarmac are governed by speed limits, but a tantalisingly brief corridor northwest of Aachen – and directly en route to Cologne from Stavelot – is derestricted. It's a chance to properly stretch the Ford's blustery powerplant, but the combination of drizzle and morning traffic is thwarting any chance of a balls-to-the-wall blast. Willing trucks to pull in, E-class minicabs to get on with overtaking and everybody else to just stay in lane, my imaginary game of Autobahn Tetris is exasperating. What I wouldn't give for clear air...

And then I get it. Chit-chat with Olgun ceases and moments later the red needle is grazing 140mph – within a whisker of the claimed top speed. Goodyears roaring and thick, frigid air smashing over the front of the car, our closing speed on trucks dawdling in the inside lane is now by some margin greater than the national speed limit at home, and there's still a noticeable slice of the rev range left untapped. I suspect an indicated 150mph is possible, but traffic calls time on an attempt.

Perhaps because of the stability generated by the Focus's WRC-style front track, or simply because this kind of velocity isn't particularly fast for modern cars, the whole high-speed episode lacks the tension of previous forays deep into triple figures. Either way, when we peel off Henry Ford Strasse soon after and roll through Gate 24 of Ford's sprawling facility in Cologne, having covered nearly 500 miles in two days, my overriding impression of our salt-caked Focus is that it's comprehensively over-engineered. It reeks of capability and rally-derived dependability, which combined with the exclusivity of a small production run and a uniform but exceptionally high specification makes for a hot hatch far beyond the ordinary, even 13 years on. That it's spinetinglingly fast down a twisting road and engages its driver with a rare blend of vibrancy and mischief seals the deal.

In one of these old-world halls is the latest car in the dynasty Ford is carefully constructing around the Focus RS nameplate. That it will be better in every measurable way than the flawed diamond we've driven here in is a given. What remains to be seen is whether Ford has executed a similar level of mechanical ambition as it did with the Mk1, giving the new car potential for the same previously unprecedented level of performance.

Two hours later, half a century of blue-collar performance legends, including a sub-zero Escort RS1600 and a barking Group B RS200, are assembled alongside some of Ford's highest-ranking generals. Group vice president Jim Farley and executive vice president Raj Nair are excitedly addressing the world's media, who are sitting in the largest indoor grandstand imaginable, and Ken Block is backstage twiddling his thumbs in the driver's seat of the latest fast Ford, waiting for his cue to drive on stage as only Ken can. The scene is well and truly set; time to see if the new boy stacks up.











#### Specification

#### **FORD** FOCUS RS

Engine In-line 4-cvl, 1998cc, turbo Power 212bhp @ 5500rpm Torque 229lb ft @ 3500rpm **Transmission** Five-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive, limited-slip differential Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar Rear suspension Multi-link, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar Brakes Ventilated 325mm front discs, solid 280mm rear discs. ABS Wheels 8 x 18in front and rear Tyres 225/40 ZR18 front and rear Weight 1278kg Power-to-weight 169bhp/ton **0-60mph** 5.9sec (tested) Top speed 143mph (claimed) Price when new £19.995 On sale 2002-04 **Value today** £9000-12,000

evo rating ★★★★☆



# FOCUS RS











Left: Recaro Sportster CS shell buckets look the business but won't he standard instead the RS will use the same seats as the Focus ST

E'LL COME TO THE FOUR-WHEEL drive in a minute. I know it's what everyone is talking about, but first I want to discuss rubber. Actually I want to talk about looks too, because when I first walk into the studio in Cologne and see the new RS, I think it looks a bit underwhelming. Five doors, the lack of big arches... compared with the pugnacious Mk2 RS it looks very family friendly. But looks can be deceiving, and one line in the limited information we are given makes me think that the new Focus RS could be more hardcore than any previous road-going Rallye Sport: there is the option of running its 19-inch wheels on Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres. That's a big statement of intent from Ford Performance, clearly pitching it not just against cars like the useable Golf R and Audi RS3, but also the more unhinged and track-focused Mégane Trophy-R.

Ford has been irritatingly coy about the new RS's power and torque figures, merely saying it has 'well in excess of 316bhp' and a rev limit of 6800rpm. Given that the previous generation's run-out RS500 version had 345bhp, we'd be very surprised if the Mk3 was punching out anything less than 350bhp. The engine is essentially the 2.3-litre, four-cylinder EcoBoost unit that we will see in the Mustang when it arrives over here. However, in order to withstand higher temperatures, the alloy for the cylinder head has been upgraded, as has the head gasket, and the block has stronger high-tensile cast-iron liners. The turbo has also been switched for a new lowinertia twin-scroll item, while a bigger intercooler sits prominently behind the almost invisibly fine mesh of the lower grille. I'm not sure that they're meant to, but someone starts up the RS in the studio and even with the slightest tickle on the throttle the sound from the bigbore exhaust pipes is deep, gruff and purposeful.

Curiously, you can blame the lack of boldly blistered arches on the four-wheel-drive system. According to the car's exterior designer, Ernesto Rupar, the choice was between spending money on a bespoke, wide body (as they did last time) or splashing the cash on the drivetrain. Personally I think they made the right choice given that the designers were already slightly hobbled

with the five-door body. It's still an aggressive-looking package and things like the huge Brembo brakes lend subtle purpose, but overall it's a sleeker design. Given that this RS will be sold in markets all around the world, not just Europe, it was perhaps thought that a slightly less shouty exterior would broaden appeal. Incidentally, this colour - Liquid Blue - is currently only for the show car. The slightly muted palate available to customers will be Nitrous Blue (a bit lighter than Performance Blue), Stealth Grey, Absolute Black and Frozen White.

Under the skin, the power assistance for the steering is electronic, but Ford usually does good steering and a more rigid suspension knuckle design combined with shorter link arms are said to improve feel over the ST. As well as a shorter lever for the six-speed manual, the transmission tunnel also has a button labelled 'Drive Mode', which will likely switch the adjustable dampers (attached to firmer springs, anti-roll bars and bushes) between two stiffness levels. Despite Ford trumpeting Ken Block as a consultant on the project, there is nothing particularly bling about the handbrake. The ST's Recaros are standard, but in the show car there are optional shell buckets (Recaro's Sportster CS model, as found in numerous other performance cars), which lift the ambiance, but also feel as if they're set a little high.

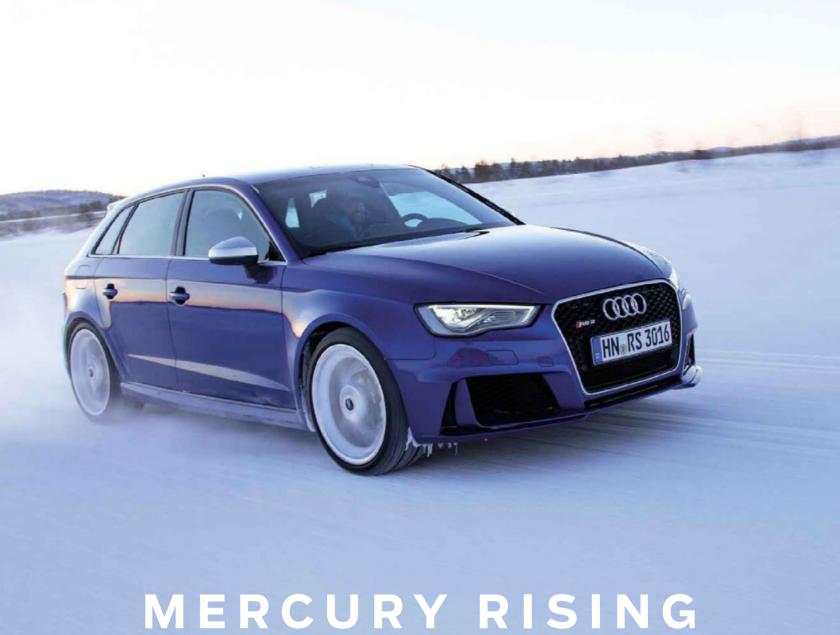
And so to the four-wheel drive. As with so much else about this car, the specifics are still sketchy. However, we do know there is proper torque vectoring at the rear axle. There are two electronically controlled clutch packs either side of the 'rear drive unit'. The first shuffles torque between the front and rear axles, with up to 70 per cent going to the rear. The second can then administer up to 100 per cent of that drive to either rear wheel. As part of the ESP there is also a brakebased Torque Vectoring Control System, which works in parallel with the aforementioned torque vectoring. Ford boasts of lateral grip exceeding 1G but also of 'controlled oversteer drifts at the track', which sounds fun.

By the time you read this we will probably know even more things about the new RS (visit evo.co.uk to get the latest news). Things like the price, which everyone is expecting to be under £30k in order to do battle with the Golf R. If that's so, then we could have an incredible performance bargain battle on our hands. Admittedly it's Golf against Focus rather than Polo against Fiesta as it is on the WRC stages, but it feels rather like Ford against VW could become the new Subaru against Mitsubishi. Pick your side now. ■



Engine In-line 4-cyl, 2253cc, turbo Power 350bhp (est) Weight 1480kg (est) Power-to-weight 240bhp/ton (est) **0-62mph** 5.0sec (est) Top speed 165mph (est)

Basic price £29,900 (est)



few bruised egos in Ingolstadt last year. Having seen the last RS3 largely panned as fast but dull, Audi engineers had to watch their counterparts in Wolfsburg win unremitting praise for the Golf R. I imagine quattro's quiet fury was similar to that felt by Taittinger or Pomeroy on receiving a drubbing in a blind taste test from Lidl's own.

But now we have the new RS3 Sportback, built on the same platform as the Golf. And ahead of the official unveiling at the Geneva motor show, a handful of journalists have been shipped to a proving ground called Test World in the Arctic Circle to drive it. As you'd expect, the new car has more power and torque, with the 2.5-litre five-cylinder now putting out 362bhp and 343lb ft. For reference, that's a smidgen more than a Mercedes A45 AMG. Weight is down by 55kg and the result is an insanely

Audi picked the Arctic Circle to prove that the new RS3 is made of decidedly hotter stuff than its much derided predecessor. Our definitive judgement will have to wait for proper roads, but initial impressions give a promisingly warm glow

by HENRY CATCHPOLE

PHOTOGRAPHY by MATT HOWELL

rapid 0-62mph time of just 4.3sec, dispatched with the aid of the fantastically cool-sounding launch control.

Of course, pace was never the RS3's problem; it was involvement. The fitment of variable ratio steering doesn't initially seem to bode well, but quattro general manager Stephan Reil explains that it's not the same as the much-castigated 'dynamic steering' found in larger RS models. This is a simple, mechanically variable rack that gradually quickens the ratio from 15.3 to 10.9 as you add more lock. There is a 25mm drop in ride height over a standard A3 and there will be a choice of passive or magnetic-ride adaptive dampers. Standard dampers are fitted to the test cars: past experience suggests the simpler setup is the better option. The new car's weight saving brings the overall figure down to 1520kg and its distribution has also been shifted around slightly, with the battery now relocated



### RS3 SPORTBACK

Engine In-line 5-cyl, 2480cc, turbo Power 362bhp @ 5500rpm Torque 343lb ft @ 1625-5550rpm Weight 1520kg Power-to-weight 242bhp/ton 0-62mph 4.3sec (claimed) Top speed 174mph (delimited) Basic price £39,950







# 'It's possible to get the RS3 oversteering so much that you're travelling backwards'



from under the bonnet to inside the boot.

The heart of the quattro system in the RS3 is the excellent Haldex V electronically actuated hydraulic clutch, which sits on the rear axle. We've sung its fast-reacting praises in the past and Audi claims to have improved it still further in the new car. Inside the ECU that controls the clutch there are essentially two things going on according to Reil. First there is the program, which decides what information to take from what sensors at what time. Then there is the data package, which decides how to interpret and react to the information provided by the program. Audi jointly developed a new program for the latest TT and the new RS3 to share, before developing separate new data packages for them. The end result is a system that sends between 50 and 100 per cent of the available torque to the rear axle with more alacrity and greater keenness than ever before.



What all this means on a snow-covered surface is that the RS3 will drift. I'm the first person in the car after the press conference, which is held in a wooden hut with an open fire battling the -22C temperature. It barely gets light at midday this far north, and this early in the morning the xenons are essential, as I chase their cool blue beams through the cold maze of snow banks. I keep the ESP in its Sport setting for the first few laps until I've worked out which way the rather beautiful circuit threads through the trees. Then I switch it off, and it really will go all the way off.

Of course, pretty much anything will oversteer on a low-grip surface if you try hard enough, but the important thing is that the RS3 will do so under power. Give the accelerator a provocative nudge on the way out of a corner and you will feel the resulting power spin up the rear wheels and slew you sideways. Stay on the throttle, apply the requisite amount of opposite lock and you can keep it power oversteering for a long time too, stabilised nicely by thoughtful juggling of torque between the axles. Later, on a big snowy skidpan, it's actually possible to get the RS3 oversteering so much that you're travelling backwards, Gigi Galli-style, with the front wheels eventually pulling you back from somewhere that feels beyond the brink.

For the first time, the RS3 will be available with mighty carbon ceramic anchors inside the wheels, although, as you'd expect in the cold conditions, our Arctic RS3s are fitted with the standard wavy-edged cast-iron discs. One new option that is fitted to our test car is the sports exhaust. Having a five-cylinder engine is always a good start in acoustic terms, but the way the oval pipes not only burble and crackle on the overrun but issue some extremely loud, almost anti-lag-like reports, is very entertaining. Such exuberance is in some ways quite at odds with the RS3's aggressive but predominantly subtle looks, but I like the juxtaposition.

The S1 that Audi launched last year was good fun and despite ourselves we like the RS O3 too. As I mentioned at the start, we also adore that not so distant cousin of the RS3, the Golf R. Therefore, although a firm conclusion from our Arctic assessment would be foolhardy thanks to all the dynamic imponderables hidden by the snow, there is much to suggest that when the new RS3 hits tarmac, it could be a good 'un. We certainly hope so.

# HONDA CIVIC TYPE R

by STUART GALLAGHER

Never the best and often controversial, the hot-headed Honda is about to re-emerge in its most extreme incarnation yet

the Ariel Nomad and Ferrari FXX K, it's heartening that the health of the hot hatch market has never seemed stronger. Crucially, it looks set to continue this way for a few years yet. If you read your copy of evo in page order you will have seen which are our current favourite hot hatches and how tomorrow's – Ford's Focus RS and Audi's RS3, to name just a couple – promise further thrills ahead. Which leaves Honda, and its new Civic Type R, to complete what's shaping up as the summer of the hyper-hatch.

At the Geneva motor show in March, Honda will finally pull the wraps off its latest hot hatch, having touted it around the motor show circuit for nearly as long as it did its new NSX. This means there has been much talk, some hype, and the odd bold claim.

On the eve of its Geneva show debut, here's what we know about Honda's flashy new entrant to the realm of the hyper hatch.

POWERTRAIN

Think Type R and immediately you have visions **of a** banzai red line and a committed shove in the **back** as Honda's screaming VTEC kicks the normally aspirated engine into life. For the new Civic Type R things will be a lot different.

The engine is a 2-litre, four-cylinder, 16-valve, direct-injected petrol turbocharged VTEC unit.

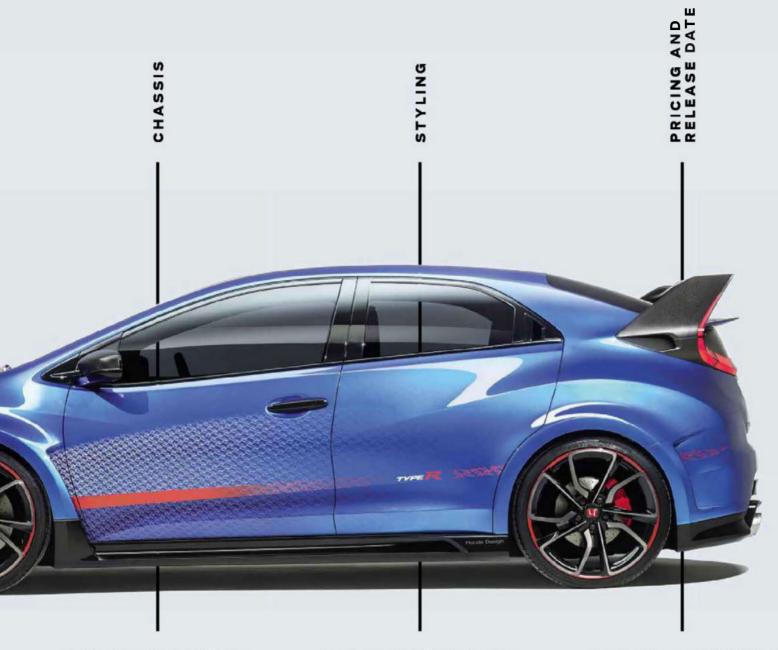
This should eradicate the Civic Type R's traditional lack of low-end torque (the outgoing FN2 version produced just 142lb ft at 5600rpm, or roughly the same as a Clio Williams...). But turbocharged engines aren't known for their love of revs, so with this one red lined at 7000rpm, Honda's engineers must have had a tough job retaining the Type R's zany character without sacrificing power and torque delivery. Talking of which, Honda is claiming 'in excess of 276bhp' (it's rumoured to be as much as 300bhp) and in the region of 300lb ft of torque, the latter available from around 2000rpm.

Throughout the Civic Type R's development programme, Honda's engineers have talked of purity of driving and driver involvement; to this end the Type R will be fitted with a new six-speed manual gearbox with ratios carefully selected to match the engine's power and torque delivery. 'We want the driver to have total control of the car. If he wants to change from fifth to third, with the new Civic Type R they can do this,' Suehiro Hasshi, the Civic Type R project leader, is quoted as saving. Meanwhile Honda has an eight-speed 'wet' double-clutch gearbox in development that it plans to introduce with a range of new turbocharged engines. So while the Type R launches with a manual gearbox, don't be surprised if it's offered with a paddleshifter further down the line

FORMANC

With 'over 276bhp' and expected to weigh in the region of 1400kg, all Honda is saying about the Civic Type R's performance is that its maximum speed will be 167mph, making it the fastest ever front-wheel-drive hatch. It's also expected to post a sub-six-second 0-62mph time and be the quickest front-wheel-drive hot hatch to lap the Nürburgring: that will mean beating the current 7min 54.03sec record held by Renault's Mégane 275 Trophy-R.





It's fair to say the previous FN2 Civic Type R was a backward step for the hot hatch, primarily because of the switch from a double wishbone setup at the rear to a less capable torsion beam. With the new car Honda has rejoined the 21st century with the fitment of a four-point adaptive damper system to accompany a chassis

'expected of a car in this class'. The adaptive dampers are said to offer the best options for the conditions, from a compliant ride for road use to a more extreme setup for track work. The front suspension gets a mechanical 'steer axis' system designed to reduce torque steer: it features two kingpins in the front suspension for optimal torque delivery through the front wheels. The Type R will also feature four-piston Brembo brake calipers and 350mm drilled discs at the front, and specially designed 19-inch lightweight alloy wheels.

Just as Ford will only be building five-door versions of its Focus ST and RS models, Honda will only sell you a Civic Type R with five doors. Why? Five-door hatches outsell three-doors three-to-one, so to offer both simply doesn't make commercial sense. To mask the five-door family-man look, Honda's stylists have produced a set of wings, splitters and dive planes to liven up the Civic's appearance, as well as to stick it more firmly to the ground at high speed. A wide front splitter and deep side skirts optimise airflow and reduce lift, while the front bumper has been shaped to eradicate air turbulence around the front wheels, cutting drag and enhancing stability; it also features extensive cooling ducts for the engine and brakes.

The floor is almost completely flat to further aid airflow and works in combination with the rear diffuser and a towering, bespoke rear wing to maximise the reduction in lift.

Final pricing for the new generation Civic Type R is still to be confirmed, but expect a list price of a whisker under £30,000. The order book opened last year, requiring a £3000 deposit if you wanted to be one of the first UK owners when deliveries start this summer.

Full details and confirmed specs will be announced on evo.co.uk on Monday, March 2 at 8pm.

#### **HONDA** CIVIC TYPE R

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 2000cc, turbo Power 276bhp+ (est)

Weight 1400kg (est)

Power-to-weight 240bhp/ton (est) **0-62mph** 5.9sec (est)

Top speed 167mph (claimed) Basic price £29,900 (est)



# From **HOT HATCH** to HYPER HATCH

The evolution of a species



The original hot hatch captured the imagination of a generation and has been ever-present in the Golf line-up since. Although the less said about the Mk3 and Mk4 GTIs, the better..

1588cc, 108bhp, 0-62mph in 9.0sec, 113mph top speed



1970s











#### 4 1984 PEUGEOT 205 TURBO 16

Just 200 road-going examples of Peugeot's mid-engined Group B monster and best-loved rally car were made for homologation purposes, Heroic.

1775cc turbo, 197bhp, 0-62mph in

#### 3 1984 PEUGEOT 205 GTI

The motoring journalist's favourite and with good reason. At a time when sports cars and supercars were still rooted in the past, this little French hatchback delivered a new style of performance motoring.

1580cc, 104bhp, 0-60mph in 8.6sec, 120mph top speed

#### 2 1979 TALBOT SUNBEAM-LOTUS

It worked for Ford and the Cortina in Touring Cars, so Talbot installed a Lotus twin-cam motor into its Sunbeam hatch and headed for the rally stage.

2170cc, 150bhp, 0-60mph in







### 1990s

#### 5 1985 MG METRO 6R4 CLUBMAN

A Metro with a mid-mounted, back-to-front six-cylinder engine powering all four wheels, what's not to like?

2991cc, 250bhp, 0-60mph in 4.5sec, 140mph top speed

#### 6 1988 LANCIA DELTA INTEGRALE

Four-wheel drive, sensational feedback, multiple World Rally Championship wins - and one of the best road-going racers ever.

1995cc turbo, 182bhp, 0-60mph in 6.6sec, 132mph top speed

#### 1993 RENAULT CLIO WILLIAMS

This limited edition (of sorts) breathed new life into a dwindling hot hatch sector and was a true 205 GTI successor

1998cc, 145bhp, 0-62mph in 7.8sec, 134mph top speed







Tiny wheelbase, big V6 engine in the middle of it. What could possibly go wrong? The Mk2 was tamer, but any V6 is an experience to sayour. Or forget, if you lifted at the wrong moment.

2946cc, 226bhp, 0-60mph in 6.6sec, 145mph top speed

11

## 9 1992 ESCORT RS COSWORTH

Technically a Sierra Sapphire RS Cosworth with 7 inches cut out of its wheelbase. Not as quick as it looked or as precise as it should have been, but a cult classic

1993cc turbo, 224bhp, 0-60mph In 6.2sec, 137mph top speed

#### 8 1991 NISSAN SUNNY GTI-R

Rallying breeds both amazing and oddball cars, such as Nissan's four-wheel-drive, turbocharged mini-hatch.

1998cc turbo, 217bhp, 0-62mph in 6.0sec, 138mph top speed



## 2000s



#### OFOCUS RS

Not a WRC homologation special, but you might be fooled by the expensive spec. Devastatingly fast point-to-point if you could tame the severe torque-steer

1998cc turbo, 212bhp, 0-60mph in 5.9sec, 144mph top speed





### 2008 RENAULT MÉGANE R26.R

If Porsche built a front-engined, front-wheel-drive hot hatch using its RS recipe, this would be the result. Only its successor, the Trophy-R, has come close.

1998cc turbo, 227bhp, 0-62mph in 6.0sec, 147mph top speed



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- · Uses GLONASS and GPS satellite technology
- Monitored by Global Telemetrics 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- · Full Warranty while within subscription
- Fully transferrable (Terms and Conditions apply)
- Direct Debit Monthly Subscription at £12.49 + VAT including full worldwide monitoring

For further information regarding SmarTrack please visit www.smartrack.eu

www.supercarfinance.co.uk

\*Device installation charges apply.















The Lamborghini Huracán has evolved into a firebreathing racer – the lighter, more powerful, rearwheel-drive LP620-2 Super Trofeo. And it's also a pointer to a 458 Speciale-rivalling road car...

by JETHRO BOVINGDON

PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT



HE ABSURDITY OF FLYING TO MALAYSIA TO drive a racing car for 40 minutes isn't completely lost on me. In some ways this is one of those jobs often referred to within the industry as 'a jolly'. And as appealing as these might sound, they're usually just frustrating and a bit of a waste of time. However, after the slightly muted response to the new Huracán from many who have driven it, and with the trip including an audience with chief test driver Giorgio Sanna, research and development director Maurizio Reggiani and the big cheese himself, CEO Stephan Winkelmann, it seemed a good opportunity to take the pulse of Lamborghini. Oh, and have you seen the Huracán LP620-2 Super Trofeo? Wow.

This new race car will, of course, form the backbone of the one-make Super Trofeo series for 2015, replacing the Gallardo. It also signals a new direction for the series and for Lamborghini in motorsport in general. The previous Gallardo racer was really a road car modified for the track, featuring the same gearbox, wiring loom, ABS system, four-wheel-drive configuration and the like. The new car is different. Developed from the ground up, it's a pukka racing machine, adopting rear-wheel drive, an Xtrac pneumatically operated sequential 'box, Motec engine management and traction control systems, Bosch racing ABS, Öhlins dampers and a host of other near-GT3-specification components. The 611bhp car was a joint project between the newly formed in-house Squadra Corse motorsport department and Dallara, and has been



built in parallel with the recently revealed Huracán GT3.

When you first set eyes on the Super Trofeo, it might as well have a Lego chassis and a first-generation e-gear system more adept at toasting clutch plates than providing forward motion - you'd still want it. For those who think the Huracán shape too tame, well here's the Lamborghini you've been waiting to see. This is the first development car and it looks battle weary but proud, and the exaggerated shape is nothing short of stunning. The sort of stunning that makes you walk around it openmouthed for ten minutes. The composite body is stretched over a similar aluminium/carbon chassis to the road car's but the differences are stark and spectacular. The front track is 27mm wider, the rear 40mm, and the Dallara-developed aerodynamic package offers much greater efficiency than the Gallardo Super Trofeo that this car replaces. Drag is down 15 per cent and goes hand-in-hand with a 43 per cent increase in downforce. An integral roll-cage as well as that new carbonfibre-reinforced chassis increase torsional rigidity by 45 per cent, and dry the LP620-2 weighs 1270kg to the road car's 1422kg.

To all intents and purposes the Super Trofeo looks like a top-

flight GT3 racer, and is intended to deliver a similar driving experience. Although, admits Sanna, the real Huracán GT3 is a whole different animal again. When I ask him what the difference is between the two cars, his response is simple: 'Total. It is more extreme in every single detail.' Even so, with nine-stage traction control, adjustable aerodynamics and chassis settings, and unencumbered by any 'balance of performance' considerations, the Super Trofeo will be a good four seconds a lap quicker around Sepang than the Gallardos that are racing over the World Final weekend that's going on concurrent with our experience.

You may still be thinking, so what? Of course it's a leap on from the Gallardo, and although I think we can all be excited about Lamborghini getting serious about international GT racing, this Super Trofeo is surely just a toy for rich middle-aged guys to play out their racing fantasies? Well, yes. And let's be honest, given the means we'd all do the same. But there is more to be interested in here. You see, that little '2' abbreviation won't just be appearing on Huracán racers. The return of the rear-wheel-drive Lamborghini road car is a certainty. Expect an entry-level rear-drive Huracán (much like the old Gallardo LP550-2 'Balboni') and also a Ferrari







Above: Huracán Super Trofeo develops almost half as much more downforce again as the outgoing Gallardo-based race car. Above right: Bovingdon acclimatises to a spartan cockpit; he's soon to be engulfed in an angry V10 howl. Note the hefty roll-cage



INTERVIEW

#### LAMBO'S INSIDE INF





Stephan Winkelmann and Maurizio Reggiani are all smiles. Why wouldn't they be? They're surrounded by customers keen to part with €280,000 to move up from Gallardo to Huracán Super Trofeo, the Malaysian royal family has just swept into the large hospitality suite to say hello, and the Aventador and Huracán are selling very nicely indeed, thank you. The perfect moment to catch them off guard? Not quite...

Despite a future rear-drive Huracán seeming like an open secret amongst the wider team, CEO Winkelmann (pictured above left) remains tight-lipped. 'We only launched the coupe six months ago and it's going very well, so we have no plans for the time being,' he says. But hypothetically, what form would it take? 'The heritage of Lamborghini is design and performance - our DNA. Four-wheel drive is one of the USPs of Lamborghini.' It sounds like a dead end, but he continues: 'If we're looking to [a rear-drive variant] we have a range of opportunities, from a real super sports car which has the maximum emotion possible, to a car that is less extreme but more fun-orientated.'

Both are keener to discuss the beauty of natural aspiration. R&D head Reggiani (above right) is clearly very proud of the Huracán's commitment to the cause. Does it provide Lamborghini with an advantage over Ferrari in the short term, with the 488 getting forced induction? 'From an engineering point of view it is clear,' he smiles. 'If I look at the emotion we're able to provide today then our car will be superior. After, we will see. Natural aspiration and many cylinders is the top ranking that you can have.' Nicely put, I think. Downsizing will be resisted for as long as possible.

And what of the much-discussed third model line? Winkelmann is unequivocal when I ask him what his ideal line-up would look like. 'I think the super sports cars that we have today are representing the brand 100 per cent,' he says. 'But we have an opportunity. The SUV is a perfectly matching product as it's the most emotional four-door segment of the market, it's growing in every region and we are credible because Lamborghini has not only built super sports cars - we did GTs, the off-roader, the Espada. Now we can do more. The third model is a huge step for us. The saloon is going down in the market and you have the problem of short- and long-wheelbase. People of my generation are looking for an SUV.' The Urus is on ice, but clearly Winkelmann is fighting for it: 'With three model lines we could sell 5000 to 6000 cars a year.'





458 Speciale-style extreme road car with plenty of Super Trofeo styling cues. Sanna admits as much to me on camera. I'd love to include a tasty little quote in here as proof, but the film crew here are working for Lamborghini and when the interview edit arrives in my inbox later, those nuggets will have mysteriously disappeared! No matter, this will be a first taste of Squadra Corse's work and a little preview of how the Huracán chassis feels with power flowing only to the rear.

Here are a few things you need to know about Malaysia: the food is truly wonderful, the humidity is almost unbearable, and the rain – when it inevitably arrives – falls in droplets as big as tennis balls. My first taste of the Huracán is at around 3pm, which as it turns out is about 60 seconds before the monsoons arrive at this time of year. The sky is a deep, malevolent grey – almost the same colour as the car – and, unsurprisingly, within the space of three corners the track has gone from bone dry to submerged. Literally. There are places where I can't see the tall red and white kerbing and the Super Trofeo crawls around on slick tyres at 30mph, maybe less, still nearly spinning out of control every time I turn the rectangular steering wheel. The team are pleased to see me make it back alive and I, as is tradition around these parts, grab a choc-ice to settle my nerves.

The next day it's my turn again. No chance of rain now and the cabin is a balmy 50C-or-so. No wonder GT racers are so skinny. Anyway, clambering into the Super Trofeo is terrifically exciting. With those now iconic Sepang grandstand canopies high on the left, the sound of wheel guns fizzing and all sorts of other clunks and whirrs emanating from the packed pitlane garages after some feisty Super Trofeo World Final action, it all feels a bit surreal and very intimidating. Earlier, Sanna had assured me that the LP620-2 is an easy car to drive, but tucked right down low behind an alien, button-festooned steering wheel and on an unfamiliar track, it all feels a bit grown-up.

The 5.2-litre V10 is already spitting out a flat, angry tune behind my back and the tyres and brakes have been warmed through by test driver Fabio Babini, so there's no need to be too cautious. Just push the white 'neutral' button on the steering wheel and flick the right-hand paddle up for first gear, give it plenty of revs, then release the short, heavy clutch to get rolling. The Super Trofeo has a pit limiter and it feels unfeasibly cool to pop, bark and stutter up the pit lane at 37mph with my foot welded to the bulkhead. At pit exit I push the yellow 'Pit' button at the top right of the 'wheel' and the V10's note suddenly frees-up and the car surges towards the first, tight right-hander.

Sepang is not a circuit you learn in a few minutes, but soon it starts to flow. As Babini and Sanna had intimated, the Super Trofeo really is an easy car to drive. Confidence comes first from absolutely superb brakes that you can stand on with all your might thanks to the ABS system not to mention the sheer grip of the 18-inch Pirelli slicks and it's supplemented by the car's balance and its perfectly configured traction control system. Of course, the sensations that you feel in this car are much more violent than in its road-going equivalent, but quickly the balance feels so much more satisfying and the electronics allow you to exploit a superprecise front-end by leaning on the traction control on the exit of each corner. Usually when you're invited to a press drive of a racing car, the set-up is very conservative (read: understeer) to stop the ham-fisted from spinning into the barriers, but this Super Trofeo feels sweet as can be, neutral on turn-in and then edging



#### **Specification**

#### **LAMBORGHINI** HURACÁN **LP620-2 SUPER TROFEO**

**Engine** V10. 5204cc Power 611bhp @ 8250rpm Torque 420lb ft @ 6500rpm Transmission Six-speed sequential, rearwheel drive, LSD, traction control Front suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, adjustable dampers, anti-roll bar Rear suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, adjustable dampers, anti-roll bar Brakes Ventilated discs, 380mm front, 335mm rear, ABS Wheels 11 x 18in front, 12 x 18in rear Tyres 305/660-18 DH front, 315/680-18 DH rear Weight (dry) 1270kg Power-to-weight (dry) 489bhp/ton 0-62mph 3.0sec (estimated) Top speed 180mph (claimed) Basic price €230,000 (plus local taxes) On sale Now

evo rating \*\*\*

Top: Sepang International Circuit was built on the site of a former palm oil tree plantation; its grandstand canopies mimic the leaves of said trees. Below: centre console swaps style for simplicity; red button unleashes an integrated fire extinguisher



ever so slightly into oversteer as you exit. The way the traction control manages that slip is incredible and feels as intuitive and sophisticated as, say, the system in the McLaren 650S GT3.

Outright aerodynamic grip isn't a match for a full-on GT3 racer's, but the Super Trofeo still requires a degree of acclimatisation in terms of braking distances and corner speeds. It takes real determination to keep accelerating when your brain is screaming to jump on the brakes. I never find the limit consistently, but it's a real thrill to keep attacking your rational senses like this, then challenging them again by carrying huge speed into the apex and getting back on the power early, safe in the knowledge that the traction control will help you scribe a neat arc of oversteer onto the next straight. Driving with the electronics as facilitators rather than inhibitors shows how conservative many road set-ups are, and is an impressive reminder that even the brilliantly judged systems on Porsches and Ferraris still have some way to go to match the best race systems.

After 20 minutes of mild disorientation brought about by the track's many tightening corners that constantly seem to surprise, the car's extreme potential, and the sheer heat inside, I'm a quivering, grinning idiot when I clamber out. It's a lot to take in, and the LP620-2 ventures so far beyond the road car that it's tricky to judge how a rear-wheel-drive roadgoing equivalent might behave. Subsequent sessions only increase that uncertainty. The Super Trofeo's 'box is pure race car and is so fast and uncompromising, the grip and response is similarly beyond anything you can experience on the road... The drivers making the leap from Gallardo Super Trofeo are going to have a real epiphany in this car, I think.

Having hoped to get a preview of how a focused, rear-wheel-drive Huracán might feel and reward, the LP620-2's performance is almost too far removed for reference. It feels like three-quarters of a GT3 car in the corners with five-quarters of the power on the straights. It's exciting and a leap of faith to explore, but also tolerant and amazingly driveable.

I'm not disappointed by the car, but maybe by my own naivety of how it might relate to the road. Yet on the way home the braking force and sensations of the aerodynamic grip start to fade and some of the other ingredients that characterise the Huracán Super Trofeo seep back into the picture. The two defining elements? That 5.2-litre V10 - specifically its ferocious top end and creamy, accurate delivery - and the balance of the rear-drive chassis. With the Ferrari 488 switching to turbocharging and the 650S already there, possessing a large capacity naturally aspirated engine will only become a bigger asset the longer Lamborghini can hang on to it. And with the switch to rear-drive, maybe the Huracán's inherent stability will be joined by the delicious and intuitive agility and balance that makes the Super Trofeo a huge amount of fun. For now we can tell you that Lamborghini is finally going racing for the long haul with an in-house team that clearly has talent and ambition. We can only hope the road cars see the benefit. ■



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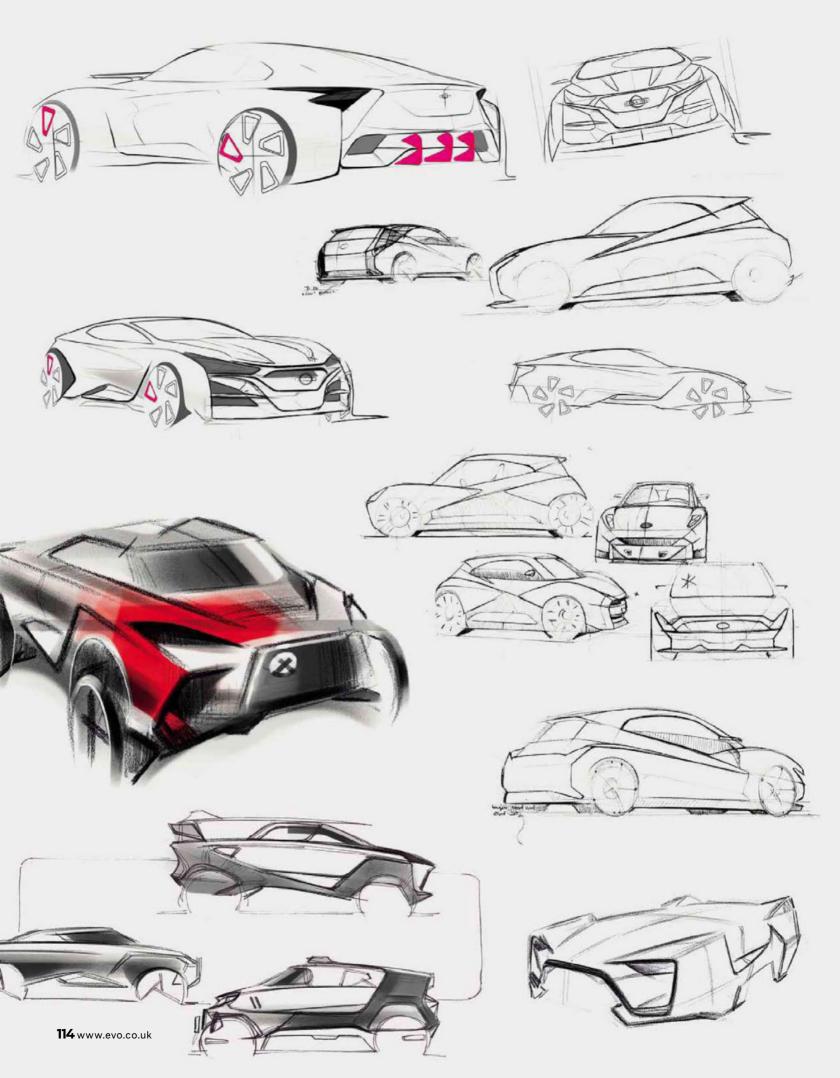
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Engine Chassis Brakes





### evo **FUTURE** of the GT-R?

For the second year of our relationship with the Royal College of Art's Vehicle Design course, we asked the students to imagine not only redesigning Nissan's super-coupe, but also how it might become an entire range

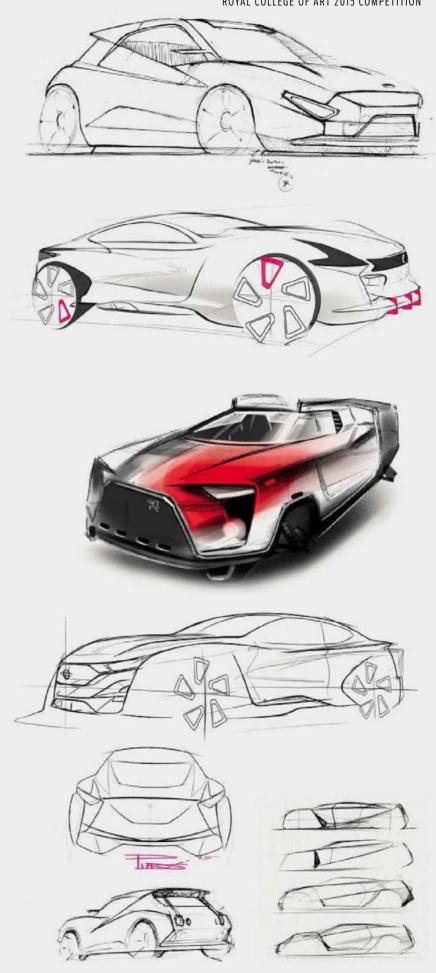
by NICK TROTT

#### IT'S BEEN 12 MONTHS SINCE EVO FIRST

partnered with the Royal College of Art's Vehicle Design course. The brief then, set by the evo team and RCA tutors, was to imagine a pure sports car for 2020. This year we switched the brief to be manufacturer-specific, and we chose an evo favourite.

We asked the RCA's first year MA Vehicle Design students to reinterpret the Nissan GT-R for 2030. Not only that, students were encouraged to apply the GT-R look to another type of vehicle (supercar, soft-top, SUV, etc) providing that engineering and packaging considerations were taken into account. The reason? Curiosity mainly - we at evo often wonder what a diverse GT-R range would look like.

The GT-R has a tremendous global following and is synonymous with a new generation of car enthusiasts, inspired by Gran Turismo and GT Academy. We asked students to be mindful of what the GT-R represents, to consider its signature design features (see overleaf), but to look beyond the obvious. The evolution of the GT-R's ethos, technical rendering skill and engineering considerations were looked at by a team of judges from evo and the RCA to create a shortlist of seven. We then asked evo readers via our Facebook page and website to choose the winner.



#### HISTORY OF GT-R DESIGN



1969 Skyline 2000GT-R



1973 Skyline H/T 2000GT-R



1989 Skyline GT-R (R32)



1997 Skyline GT-R V-Spec (R33)



1999 Skyline GT-R (R34)



2001 GT-R Concept



2005 GT-R Proto



2007 GT-R (R35)

#### THE FIRST AND SECOND GENERATIONS

of GT-R (1969-1974) shared very little design language with the later models. It was only when the model was reintroduced in 1989 – with the R32 – that the familiar GT-R aesthetic came to life. And what are the key features? R35 GT-R designer Shiro Nakamura identifies the quad tail lights, large front grille and muscular profile as key elements in the GT-R look.

The R32 to R34 GT-Rs were clearly evolutionary. The lights, silhouette and glasshouse were very similar, and the powerful stance remained consistent from 1989 to 2002. The R33 version had a slightly more bloated shape, rectified with the edgier and crisper R34 design. The signature wrapover rear spoiler was replaced with a more conventionally supported 'deck' wing, but would return with the R35 model.

Just before the R34 GT-R was phased out, Nissan unveiled the GT-R Concept at the 2001 Tokyo motor show. It met with mixed reaction,

#### 'IT WAS WITH THE R32 THAT THE FAMILIAR GT-R AESTHETIC CAME TO LIFE'

and history has not been kind to the shape, even though with hindsight we can see the embryonic lines of the subsequent R35 simmering beneath its bluff skin.

When the GT-R returned with the 'Proto' concept in 2005, the design had been refined and improved dramatically – eventually becoming the aggressively unique R35 GT-R shape we know and love today. The recent Nismo version pushes the brutalist look even further towards the race track, while the hordes of Japanese tuners have gone even more extreme.

We know little about the next-generation GT-R, but rumours persist of a hybrid version. Whether the design will need to be adapted significantly to cater for the cooling and packaging requirements of a hybrid drivetrain remain to be seen: either way, Nissan is not about to abandon the GT-R 'look'. One glance at the nose of the recently revealed GT-R LM Nismo tells you all you need to know about how preciously Nissan holds the GT-R aesthetic...

#### GT-R LM NISMO & GT-R NISMO





#### THE DESIGNS



CHARLES PURVIS

#### BIOGRAPHY

My interests range from fashion to vintage cars and motorcycles. My design ethos lies not only in brand image and heritage, but in trend forecasting and how this can be applied appropriately to a brand.



#### **PROJECT**

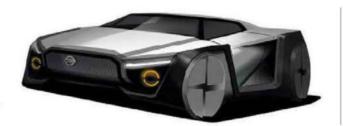
My concept explores GT-R becoming a brand. Its aim is to attract first-time GT-R buyers by creating an entry model. The styling and proportions are playful, inspired by Japanese manga to visually show its entry-level position.



MINW00 CH0I

#### **BIOGRAPHY**

I've always wanted to be a vehicle designer. As a hobby I used to classify everything around me as beautiful or not, based on appearance. I would focus on what a beautiful car might be aesthetically and how to turn this beauty into reality.



#### **PROJECT**

My design reflects the original GT-R design characteristics of bold, geometrical shoulder and side lines. With its Zen-like refined and simple design language, my GT-R represents the essence of the Japanese supercar.



DAVID TÁBOAS MARTELO DE LA MAZA

#### **BIOGRAPHY**

I am a designer not only of cars but also of products. My background was built in a Spanish University (EUDI) where I learned the design basics. Now I'm in London to refine my design skills in the automotive world.



#### **PROJECT**

My take on the GT-R is inspired by the Japanese pop culture of giant robots. I've tried to capture the spirit of the GT-R lines – its strength, aggressiveness and masculine aesthetic – and wrap it in square-lined robot's shields.



SANGMIN LEE

#### **BIOGRAPHY**

I am a young creative designer from Seoul, Korea. I studied industrial design and got a bachelor's degree at Hongik University in Seoul. After that, I developed my design skills at Hyundai, working as a vehicle designer for three years.



#### **PROJECT**

I propose the off-road GT-R.
I believe the car's technology would form a good base for an off-road version. I've harnessed the existing design DNA – square, angular lines, very different from Western supercars – for my project.



TOM ELLIS

#### **BIOGRAPHY**

I'm a dedicated and passionate vehicle designer with experience working for OEM and design consultancy studios. Growing up in Warwickshire, I've been surrounded by the car industry from a very early age.



#### **PROJECT**

This project takes influence from brutalist architecture to give an aggressive, intimidating look that's key to the spirit of the GT-R. The project is also influenced by the GT 500 version which embodies Nissan's racing heritage.



NI TAO

#### BIOGRAPHY

I'm a vehicle design student studying at the Royal College of Art. I'm originally from Shanghai, China.



#### **PROJECT**

Through my philosophy I think people's lifestyles will change by 2030. For this reason, my GT-R will be the multifunctional car that offers its users high performance technology translated through a new design language.

#### THE WINNER



OWEN

#### **BIOGRAPHY**

Originating from Cornwall, I fused a taste for art and automobiles whilst studying Vehicle Design. After earning a first class BA (hons) in Automotive Design I signed up to the RCA Vehicle Design MA to push myself further.





#### JAMES'S PROPOSAL FOR A GT-R SUPER-

hatch strikes at the heart of the evo reader. The idea is tantalising - a compact but wildly fast pocket rocket in the mould of a Group B rally car. It's no wonder that James's GT-R captured the hearts of voters on **evo**'s Facebook page.

'I'm absolutely delighted, and relieved too,' says James. 'It was a close competition and the thought of having my work published in an international magazine is still sinking in.' James feels that his design's 'personality and sense of attainability' are the key reasons why it appealed to a wide audience. 'I also think the design is desirable to the tuning and modification societies which so strongly support the GT-R,' continues James.

James can trace his desire to be a car designer back to a certain moment at his home in

Cornwall. 'It was when I first set eyes on a black Murciélago - I wanted to re-create what I felt, standing in awe of that vehicle, for other people.' He goes on to explain: 'I want to have a hand in creating these objects that we form attachments to, beyond their function. I love how anything is possible with vehicle design. It's such a progressive and optimistic industry.'

James is enjoying his time at the Royal College of Art. 'The RCA has a deep connection to the automotive industry,' he explains, 'and the 'alumni speaks for itself!' The Royal College of Arts counts heavyweight industry designers Peter Stevens, Marek Reichman and Ian Callum among its 'old boys'.

'The staff have a wealth of experience,' continues James, 'each bringing something different to the table. All of them pushing you to go further, so long as you underpin your work with meaning.'

In terms of the future, James believes there are some big challenges, and big opportunities, ahead. 'Perhaps the biggest challenge is autonomy. Not whether it's possible – it is – but the application. How far can we go with it before we start to distort the meaning of 'driving'? Also, what does it mean in terms of styling? It's this opportunity for a positive change which I'm thinking about.'

From an evo perspective, all the finalists delivered some quite exceptional work. All deserve praise, but James is undoubtedly a worthy winner - his GT-R 'super-hatch' is something we'd all love to see and the rendering of the car cocking a wheel through a corner is evocative to say the least. Over to you, Nissan...

#### LAST YEAR'S WINNER: TOM HENWOOD

'It was surreal winning the evo competition. I've been a long-time reader, so it was a real honour. I wanted to become a vehicle designer because my world has been consumed with cars and transport from an early age

'The biggest challenge for car designers is people's perception of the car in urban areas. We're told we'll all live in megacities in the future, and design studios are saturated in the dream of the autonomous car. Rules and regulations in urban areas will change the way cars look and behave. It's a constant challenge to bring radical design to the consumer: the BMW i has brought a new aesthetic

to the electric car, but companies need to make money and the risk of an extreme design is often

'Currently I'm working on my thesis, looking at the future of mechanical fascination. I foresee the electric car becoming one of those devices we take for granted in the internet age. So I'm designing the kit car of the future in the hope that people will have a tangible connection with their vehicle. This may entice them to modify and personalise it with the use of the 3D printing tech that will become a mainstay in modern homes. Naturally i want it to be a vehicle used as an escape from the megacity...'



The RCA is looking for the next generation of vehicle designers for its worldleading MA course in London. If you dream of designing cars the RCA is recruiting now – and it doesn't matter if you're a design student finishing a BA or already in the industry. For more details visit: www.rca.ac.uk/schools/ school-of-design/vehicle-design or contact wanda.polanski@rca.ac.uk

# 

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1: FLAME ON!





#### 'THIS IS ALL A BIT DAFT REALLY,' SAYS JON. 'I MEAN,

it's Saturday night. There are people at home watching *X Factor* at the moment.'

I begin laughing just as we hit a bump. Hard. The Defender goes airborne in the dark at about 80mph and on landing there's a sort of joint ooofff of exhaling air, cutting the laughter short as our spines compress milliseconds after the dampers. Instantly we both spot the small orange arrow lurking in the shadows amongst the trees ahead. I brake as late as I dare, coming back down through the gears until the speed is barely a quarter of what it was moments before. I'm still vaguely trying to contain a small slide as we slither off the muddy track into the quarry. In the darkness the pile of rocks we're now meant to drive up looks almost vertical.

'I'm more of a Strictly fan, if I'm honest,' I reply.

#### HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE IDLY DREAMED ABOUT

taking part in the Dakar rally – racing across sand dunes miles from anywhere, putting massive travel suspension through its paces day and night for two gruelling weeks? I'm going to assume that quite a few hands have gone up. And how many of you would know where to start in making that dream come true? I'm going to assume quite a few of those hands are now scratching heads. I say that as someone who has also dreamed and subsequently pondered.

The Defender Challenge was set up in 2014 by Land Rover and Bowler in order to provide exactly that first step on the road







to the Dakar. A one-make series with seven rounds, it offers the chance to get to grips with all the basics that you would need before progressing to rally raid. Most of the rounds are on normal BTRDA gravel stage rallies. Indeed, I saw all the Defenders at the Woodpecker Rally when I was competing in my own Mk2 Escort in August (evo 202). However, two of the championship rounds are hill rallies (the Welsh and the Borders) and when Land Rover offered me the chance to take part, I knew it was in one of these slightly different events that I wanted to compete.

Exactly how different a hill rally is became evident approximately two metres after leaving the first time control in Galloway Forest, Scotland. In front of us was a river crossing. Not some Zen-like ornamental trickle over a few pebbles, either, but a lot of fastflowing brown water sluicing off the hillsides and hiding boulders. Even more amazingly, this wet hurdle wasn't even part of a timed stage - crossing it was necessary just to leave the service park. And if we didn't get washed away in the raging torrents, then there was what looked like an almost unclimbable bank on the other side. You most definitely wouldn't catch a WRC car, let alone my Escort, tackling this sort of terrain.

As a result I don't mind admitting that, as we wait for the seconds to tick down to our start time, I'm quite nervous. Bordering on scared. My off-roading experience before this has amounted to half a day in the controlled environs of Eastnor Castle about eight years ago and some mucking about in a Hyundai Terracan on eCoty once. This already looks much more serious. Thankfully, sitting next to me in the co-driver's position, or 'silly seat', is Jon Chester, brand director for Bowler and fellow beard enthusiast. He's clearly less flustered than me, although I think that could just be the lingering effects of the previous night's pints.

'You'll be fine' he says, breezily. 'Did you bring that sausage roll with you? I'm starving.'

'Yes. You can have it if we survive the upper reaches of the Ganges,' I reply, slightly distractedly.

I'm aware I need to carry enough speed to get up the far bank, but I'm also keen not to charge headlong into the water and flood the engine (as I've already seen one person do). As the marshal waves us off, I select second gear, ease into the water and then give it pretty much everything with my right foot, just trusting the car to do the rest. The Defender rocks and rolls and scrabbles and claws as its live axles articulate one way then the other. Tyres slip and tyres grip and there's an alarming jolt on my side of the car over one particularly huge rock hidden from view just under the surface. But to my amazement we're moving forwards. This mayhem ensues for several interminable seconds that feel like minutes, but then miraculously the 90's short wheelbase points alarmingly skywards, the Kumho tyres bite into the sodden Scottish turf, and at quite a severe angle we accelerate out of the water trailing a small flood behind us, like Archimedes leaping from his bath. I breathe a sigh of relief. Just 13 competitive stages to go...

The venerable Land Rover Defender is a vehicle much loved by many at evo. Icon is a hideously over-used word, but I think in the case of the boxy British off-roader it is rightly applicable. It is just so wonderfully honest, rugged and capable. However, we would be the first to admit that the pages of a magazine devoted to 'the thrill of driving' are not its usual home. Despite these Defender 90s being tweaked by Bowler, they remain remarkably close to standard. The engine is a re-mapped version of the four-cylinder 2.2-litre turbodiesel, with power up slightly to 170bhp and torque swollen Left: beardy Catchpole drives while Bowler's beardy Jon Chester tells him where to go. Far left: cabin packed with race goodies; cars enjoy serious support from pukka Dakar truck

**'ICON IS A HIDEOUSLY** OVER-USED WORD, BUT I THINK IN THE CASE OF THE BOXY BRIT, IT'S RIGHTLY APPLICABLE'









Right: off-road night stages are particularly challenging. Left: rudimentary pit garage. Below left: forestry tracks allow a semblance of speed. Bottom left: the 'get a bigger hammer' school of car maintenance

a little further to 332lb ft. An outlandish-looking lever (which is actually very comfy) sprouts from the transmission tunnel but the standard six-speed gearbox remains, with the usual diff lock and high/low ratio capability.

To be honest it's hard to know to what extent the interior has been stripped out because Defenders are basic at the best of times. The addition of a roll-cage is definitely new though, as are the intercoms, bucket seats and harnesses. One tip I pick up early on is to let the handbrake off (down by your left knee) before you do up all the harness. Bit like remembering to have a pee before getting into a sleeping bag.

The first few stages are a steep learning curve for many reasons. First, there is the lack of pace notes, which is initially very unnerving. I'm reasonably familiar with haring through forests, but in the past I've always had someone in my ear telling me vaguely what was coming next. In hill rallies, however, you have to drive everything on sight, with only some small orange arrows to point you the right way at junctions. As a result, the co-driver is essentially just an extra pair of terrified eyes helping you spot potential trouble. And some company while you're hanging around.

The second thing to get to grips with is the Defender's handling. The relatively high centre of gravity combined with the short, 90-inch wheelbase make things feel incredibly precarious until you're acclimatised. Perched up in your lofty position you feel a long way from the ground and there is the distinct sense that you could tip and then topple if you ask too much. This concern isn't helped by the sight that greets us about a mile into the first stage: Land Rover number 38 is on its side. After misreading an orange arrow and then trying to cut a corner too tightly, they had popped the inside two wheels high in the air and then laid it down heavily on its side like a rhino after a tranquiliser. Defenders being the tough things they are, the car is, of course, righted and back in the fray later in the rally, but that initial sight of it stricken is a sobering one and makes me extra-keen to take the first couple of stages easily to avoid coming a similarly embarrassing cropper.

Amazingly, the Defender is actually quite a drifter once you're going quickly. This is fun and helps you set the car up for corners, but you need to keep the slides fairly well contained because the steering is so slow that you will never wind on enough lock to keep up with the tight arc of the short wheelbase. Or at least you might catch it one way, but you won't get it as it swings back the other way. In the end you learn to let it find its own path to some extent, not fighting it but guiding it.

Much the same principle applies to the off-road sections, which frequently have huge ruts to keep you on course whether you like it or not. It's a curious feeling flying along what would be extremely fast stages on a WRC rally and then slowing to what feels like walking pace as you turn off the forest track into the technical sections. These can be anything from enormous ditches filled with water to huge hills of quarried stone. I have no idea what I'm doing, so decide to trust the Defender and listen to Jon, whose only



#### 'AMAZINGLY, THE **DEFENDER IS QUITE A** DRIFTER ONCE YOU'RE GOING QUICKLY'

instruction seems to be an encouraging, 'Okay, full throttle!'

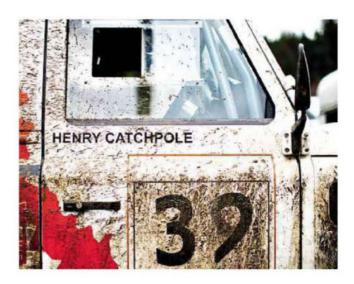
First stages survived, we head back to the warm embrace of the team truck, which is a wonderfully unnecessary Dakar support vehicle. The service park is a Land Rover marketing department's muddy dream. Everything seems to be a Land Rover in some form or other, from the ambulance that's been converted from an old Rangie, to the bonkers-looking specials that bear resemblance to a Defender only in the same way that a Mr Universe competitor is the same species as me. At least three-quarters of the vehicles competing have Bowler DNA in their design and, as such, Drew Bowler is this service park's Adrian Newey. Short, smiley, quite shy and about as hirsute as Newey, Drew is an incredibly nice man. Mobbed is perhaps a stretch too far, but throughout the weekend there is a steady stream of people that all want to say hello, ask him a question, or just shake his hand.

There's a certain amount of repetition to the stages and after the first few runs through we're getting to know some sections pretty well, although the organisers occasionally throw in a small diversion here or there to keep us on our toes and check we haven't got complacent. However, stage seven punts us into something completely different. I can only describe it as like driving through thick chocolate mousse. The instinct is to scythe through it as fast as possible, masterfully parting the brown gloop with the tyres. The problem with that is what lurks beneath. Roots, rocks and ruts all lie in wait, so you could unexpectedly hit something very hard. I do my best to navigate through and around the troughs that I can see, but sometimes there is no option but to take the hit.

There are much faster rough sections too, like the rocky path that I started off taking gingerly in third gear but will be charging along in fifth by the end of the weekend. Having initially thought that neither the Defender nor its occupants could travel any faster over the stony punishment without severe damage to the undercarriages of all concerned, it becomes clear from the stage times that we'll have to. The sensation isn't actually any less comfortable at greater speed - if anything it's slightly better, as we skim over a little more of it - but there is nonetheless a constant feeling that spleen, kidneys, liver, gall bladder, lungs and large sections of intestine are being jumbled inside my ribcage like the lottery balls inside their tumbler.

Stage eight is delayed a bit just to make sure that the last of the light has drained from the sky and it's a proper night stage for all the competitors. It is the longest stage that we've done so far, combining two of the earlier loops into one massive test. We've got two incredibly bright LED lamp pods on the front of the Defender and when they're not underwater or pointing at the sky, they do a stunning job of throwing a whitish blanket of light over the





Right: did you hear the one about ...? Henry embraces the spirit of hill rallying, observed by co-driver Jon. Above: the proper colour for a Defender - the factory hue and lashing of mud



landscape. As we head out onto the more exposed hillside I can see two or three other white beams in the distance waving around in the vast darkness. It's like being in a ski resort at night, looking up towards the slopes and seeing the lights of the piste bashers scattered across the mountain as they go about their nightly work.

It's not long after Jon has begun the discussion about Saturday night television that we encounter our trickiest moment of the whole rally. Ahead of us is the steepest climb of the stage. It has deteriorated throughout the day, getting progressively more slippery and churned with every pass. The scrambling dénouement is a vertical slab of rock right at the top, which the right-hand wheels must scrabble and claw their way up and over. If you ever ignored the ladder and tried to climb up a slide, you'll know the feeling.

As we round the corner onto the climb and give it full throttle, the sight isn't pretty. Ahead is another Defender. I can hear the roar of its engine even over the noise of ours as it tackles the final slab... and fails. Now it's slithering back towards us and I'm rapidly engaging reverse and trying to remember how much steering I did on the way up as I try to retrace my tracks into the inky blackness. Somehow we both slither to the bottom without making contact or toppling end over end. They make it up on the second attempt, but we then fail on our first attempt (the diff-lock having disengaged on the way up). This means we have to do the reverse of doom all over again, before somehow making it over the second time in a maelstrom of full throttle, engine noise, mud, vocal encouragement from Jon and me and, most importantly, a fully engaged diff-lock.

#### WHEN I GO TO CLUTCH MY TOOTHBRUSH THE

following morning, my right hand aches: because the Defender has a relatively narrow powerband, you tend to change gears fairly often, meaning you do a lot of one-handed steering, and I'm suffering the consequences.

The Sunday stages are mostly the reverse of the previous day's and this means that the discomfort levels are cranked up a notch. The reason is that the braking bumps created in the tracks throughout the previous day are now like a washboard as we try to accelerate out of each corner.

With the new day comes greater confidence. I'm braking later (it's amazing how you can stand the Defender on its nose), backing it into corners, getting in tune with the way it swings. I'm hitting everything faster, confident the metal underneath me can take it even if I'm not sure my body can. Back in service, a bent steering guard shows I've struck (so to speak) a happy medium of pushing just hard enough.

For all the rough and tumble, it's a balancing act to drive quickly. Although Jon reckons we're as fast as anyone on the open sections, I know I'm still losing lots of time to the quickest guys on the technical sections. Edd Cobley of Team Harford is the championship's star. You could argue he has an advantage as he's an instructor at a Land Rover Experience Centre, but regardless of this, his overall sixth-place finish is remarkable.

At the end of two days we finish exactly halfway through the overall field (21st) and fourth out of eight in the Defender Challenge. It's a respectable enough result but I'll take much more than just a set of stage times away from the rally. For a start, it really felt like an adventure. I was continuously learning new things and after some of the obstacles we tackled, I genuinely feel like I'm equipped with a few more skills if I ever found the funds to go and attempt the Dakar or its (ironically) African ilk.

Finally, if you believe that motorsport should first and foremost be fun (and I do), then the wonderful world of hill rallies could be just the thing for you. For me, the story that sums up hill rallying is one recounted by a marshal I was chatting to. He said that, standing out at his post on the Saturday night, he would hear a monstrous, barely muffled V8 soundtrack roaring towards him from miles away. As the car approached the technical section where he was, the lights would slow, the engine noise would recede and would be replaced by another sound entirely: laughter.

#### LAND ROVER DEFENDER CHALLENGE

Engine In-line four-cylinder, 2198cc

CO2 266g/km

Power 170bhp @ 3250rpm

**Torque** 332lb ft @ 2390rpm

**Transmission** Six-speed manual, low-ratio transfer



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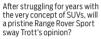
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From STI to vRS, evo's Fast Fleet is the biggest and most comprehensive long-term section in the business. This month...

#### RANGE ROVER SPORT by Nick Trott

Editor





#### LANCIA INTEGRALE by Richard Lane

Subeditor

Lane calls time on the Grale's winter stint, but will treasure the memories of his daily timecapsule experience



#### NISSAN GT-R by David Yu

Contributor

Power, chassis, transmission everything's working a treat on Yu's ageing supercoupe. Except the noisy rear brakes



#### SEAT LEON CUPRA by Ian Eveleigh

Production editor

Eveleigh's hot hatch goes in for a DAB repair and returns with new boots and a suspicious fuel economy figure



#### RENAULT MÉGANE by Richard Meaden

Contributing editor

Meaden's Audi R8 rehound is already working wonders – he's besotted. Just don't engage Sport mode on a wet road.



#### McLAREN 12C SPIDER by SSO

Contributor

Mr and Mrs SSO indulge in the charms of a particularly unsubtle 650S Spider. Is an upgrade on the cards?



SKODA OCTAVIA vRS

Big miles heading into the wilds

of Snowdonia reveal small but important snippets of life with

Skoda's practical hatchback

by Dean Smith

Photographer

BMW M4

Road test editor

#### SUBARU WRX STI

Buried within the WRX's cheap plastics and heavy-handed chassis is a car that will dance If pushed, whispers Gallagher



#### by Stuart Gallagher Managing editor

FORD FIESTA ST

Features editor

by Henry Catchpole

Ford's smaller ST model gets an

outing at Bedford Autodrome

Can it replicate its sparkling

road manners on the track



#### SUBARU IMPREZA by Nick Trott

Editor

We're no strangers to turbo Scoobys at **evo**, and Trott's done a deal on one with a vision of driving it to Monte Carlo



Staff photographer

AUDI S1

by Jethro Bovingdon Contributing editor

Magnificent the S1 may be.

but Bovingdon wants more

particularly as its engine is

shared with the 296bhp Golf R

FERRARI 458 ITALIA

An unpleasant rattle from

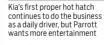
the 60,000-mile V8 makes

Simon's blood run cold - but

by Simon George

Contributor

only briefly



KIA PROCEED GT

by Aston Parrott



#### by Dan Prosser

Volkswagen Golf GTI, Ferrari Scuderia Spider 16M, Porsche 911 3.0 SC, Renault Clio 182, Mazda MX-5 Mk2, Toyota Celica GT-Four, Ford Escort RS2000, BMW 2002, Porsche 996 Carrera, Ferrari F40, Peugeot 106 Rallye, Lamborghini Murciélago



After a trip to the North York

Moors for a crucial triple-test involving the M4, Prosser longs

for a Blakey Ridge lock-in

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# **NEW ARRIVAL** Range Rover Sport Can our new £97.000. 334bhp (and 2398kg) 4x4 convert a staunch SUV-sceptic?

IT'S A FABULOUS picture, isn't it? A shiny new Range Rover Sport, casually and confidently taking a left-hander at a decent lick. It could be a marketing picture, selling a dream, And for many it is a dream. The Range Rover Sport – especially in Autograph Dynamic trim with a thumping great 4.4-litre turbo V8 diesel – is unquestionably one of the most desirable SUVs. The styling is finely honed, the interior a match for those of the most luxurious vehicles in the world, and the chassis (and badge) promises all-condition indomitability. So what's not to like? Mmm, where do I start...?

I'll be honest: I'm not a fan of big SUVs. What they gain in infrequently deployed all-weather capability they lose in general driving dynamics. For me it's more important that a car is enjoyable to drive for the majority of time, rather than able to cope with a grassy bank on the odd occasion.

Simply put, I don't need a raised driving position, my driving habits rarely involve fields or descents, and the boot in a Ford C-max is the same size as those in most big SUVs. The majority of premium saloons or estate cars also offer similar, and often greater, levels of long-distance driving comfort. And status? Couldn't give a monkey's.

So this is going to be a revealing year. Will this car show up hitherto hidden talents and worm its way into my affections? And, perhaps more intriguingly, will it make me reconsider my feelings on big SUVs in general?

I was given the chance to spec OV64 LBP via a very intuitive online configurator and, if I'm honest, I'm pleased with the results. The colour is Fuji White with a black roof. The contrast between this and the Ebony/Pimento (black and red) interior is pretty stylish. Previous experience of the breathless V6 diesel meant a risky V8 diesel choice, but the fun of exercising its monstrous torque (546lb ft) should be worth the inevitable fuel bills (if I average 28mpg, I'll be impressed).

The basic price for this model is £82,650, but ours came in at £96,907 thanks to a few (quite a few) choice options. These include a full-size sliding panoramic roof, 22-inch forged, ceramic-polished alloys (£3120 – nearly £1000 more than I paid for the entire Subaru on p138!), a solar attenuating windscreen and privacy glass, an electrically deployable tow bar, adaptive xenon headlamps, 20-way powered

seats with memory, upper section articulation and massage, rear-seat entertainment with a 10.2-inch screen, and a Meridian audio system (825 watts) with 19 speakers and TV. There's more, too much more to detail, but I'll be running you through it over the coming year.

So let's see what that time brings. I fully acknowledge that I go into this long-term loan with prejudice. And while I have no doubt that the Sport will impress me, I remain sceptical about whether it will be as fun to drive as an equivalent supersaloon or super-estate.

Nick Trott (@evoNickTrott)

Date acquired	December 2014
Total mileage	2082
Mileage this month	1281
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	26.1







NO POINT STRINGING things out over the next half-dozen reports, so I might as well say it now: I absolutely love this car! Not even wet, slippery and often frosty roads can cool my ardour for the Trophy. Okay, so I'll confess to wishing its hardcore Recaros were heated to make subzero mornings a bit more tolerable, but I've quickly learned to get up

a few minutes early, start the car and leave it running so everything has warmed up before I get going. If you knew how much I enjoy lying in bed, you'd appreciate just how successfully the Mégane has wormed its way into my affections.

I had worried that the optional 19in Turini alloys and Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres might have hobbled it for the worst of the winter months, but I have to say that – so far – it's coping with the wet and cold better than expected. You need to be mindful on the coldest mornings, as the rears never really have a chance to generate much heat, but there's less slithering, sliding and general edginess than you might expect. The fronts manage to gain decent purchase, so there's not too much scrabbling around, though it's

best to avoid the more aggressive Sport mode in such conditions, as it sharpens the throttle and relaxes the ESP just enough to let you get yourself into a little bit of trouble if you take too many liberties.

The problem is, Sport mode also unleashes a fruity fusillade of pops and crackles from the Akrapovic exhaust on a trailing throttle, which I find highly entertaining. But then I am a bit of a tart when it comes to Sport buttons. I just can't resist them.

I'd be lying if I said I wasn't longing for warmer, drier weather so I can really dip into the Trophy's all-out ability, properly lean on the grip of Michelin's finest, and enjoy putting those trick Öhlins dampers to the test at the odd trackday. Still, if the first few months with the Trophy are any indication, I'm more than happy enjoying this genuinely special car through the remnants of winter.

#### Richard Meaden (@DickieMeaden)

Date acquired	December 2014
Total mileage	3106
Mileage this month	1525
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	27.1

Ford Fiesta ST

#### **Ford** Fiesta ST

We know the Fiesta is great on the road, but what about on track?

FOR LOGISTICAL REASONS too boring to mention, I had my Fiesta ST at the Bedford Autodrome on the same day that I drove the Elise S Cup (see Driven). So before I went out in the Lotus, I took the Ford for a few laps of the South Circuit. With its two long straights and predominantly fast corners, the South is perhaps not the ideal circuit for the little hatchback, but nonetheless I thought it would be interesting.

The track's one hairpin quickly unmasked the Fiesta's lack of LSD, with the power spinning away scrappily through the inside wheel, but the rest of the lap was rather more impressive. At the end of the start/finish straight is a swift left-right chicane followed by a very fast left-hander. It's a perfect exemplar of why visiting a track is such fun – the sort of test of nerve and delicate high-speed balance that you'd never commit to on the road. Lap after lap through the chicane the Fiesta carried far more speed than I'd initially thought possible. The ST's relatively light kerb weight of 1088kg undoubtedly helped in the direction change, but I was more impressed than ever with the ContiSportContact 5 rubber and how fiercely it clung to the tarmac even if frequently only three of the tyres were in contact.

In terms of adjustability, the ST reacted just as it would on the road, with a little lift tightening the nose and a bigger lift pitching the rear out of line. All easily controlled stuff.



Strangely, though, the car felt better when dialled back slightly from my attempts at the full Kubica. It by no means dissolved into a dynamic mess when trying to extract the last few tenths, but a certain raggedness crept in at the edges and a bit of the lovely fluidity was lost. In some ways this isn't a surprise – the Fiesta is a road car, after all, and if I had to make a choice I would rather the ST be

sparkling company on the road and only good on the track, rather than the other way round. ■

Henry Catchpole (@HenryCatchpole)

Date acquired	July 2014
Total mileage	11,625
Mileage this month	1830
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	38.9



#### **Audi** S1

MILEAGE CONTINUES TO accrue painfully slowly on the S1 because it's spent most of its time in a car park at Heathrow of late. This is a bit annoying, but hopefully the figure will ramp up significantly in the next month or two.

When I'm actually in the S1, I still really enjoy it. This is mainly because it's such a rorty thing and nails the little car/big engine feel that's always been a huge part of the hot hatch formula over the years. As others downsize, the S1's bruising 2-litre turbocharged engine just feels mighty and slightly illicit.

Now it's fully run-in I can work beyond the mid-range and let the engine run out to the limiter. I'm doing this as much as possible as Its 2-litre turbo engine (now finally run-in) is a big part of the S1's character. But could it have had more power?

I'm a strong believer that a regularly extended young engine will make for a faster car in the long term. That's my excuse, anyway. Plus every engineer I've ever asked about running-in procedures has suggested to 'give it death' from day one – or words to that effect.

The engine is happy to wind around to the red, but it does lack the bite and energy of the Golf R's top end. Given the R has 297bhp to the S1's 228, you might expect as much, but as it's essentially the same EA888 engine it's hard not to feel slightly short-changed. Maybe a gentle bit of chip tuning is in order...

One thing I can't get near is the official 40.4mpg. Not even close. Usually it hovers in the 28-30mpg region. I'm pretty allergic to endless

'It's essentially the same engine as in the Golf R, so it's hard not to feel slightly short-changed'

Date acquired	December 2014
Total mileage	1428
Mileage this month	683
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	30.2

traffic jams and so avoid rush hour like the plague, so my average speed is usually pretty good. Even so, struggling to get within 10mpg of the official claim shows how absurd they really are. No matter, as petrol prices decrease it doesn't seem so painful and I've always thought anything close to 30mpg for a car with performance as good as this is well within the realms of acceptability.

So with another tank of super, a run-in engine and still pretty grimy weather to contend with, I'll try to take the SI to a track in the next few weeks. I'm really keen to see how the four-wheel-drive system and magnetic dampers cope at maximum attack...

Jethro Bovingdon (@JethroBovingdon)





#### Lancia Delta Integrale

Italy's most famous hatchback conquers the very worst of winter – then bravely climbs back into bed

THERE REALLY ISN'T an easy way to put this.
For the foreseeable future I'm relieving the Integrale of duties, which have namely been to transport me back and forth from evo HQ and to do so in damned entertaining fashion.

There's no one reason why I've chosen to do this. Indeed it's not the car that's throwing in the towel, but me, because ultimately running an Integrale in this fashion simply isn't... sensible. I'll hate myself for writing that in years to come.

But put yourself in my shoes. The odometer keeps revolving and our roads increasingly exhibit the deathly pallor of sodium chloride. The car also hadn't (and I use the past tense because it's already tucked up far away) seen a truly dry night for weeks and my paranoia was exacerbated to the point where it wasn't funny at all.

A recent wheel-alignment expedition to Tyres Northampton gave me a chance to have a nervous and prolonged poke around the car's underside. It had, in fairness, held up perfectly well, but there are chinks in the armour that winter would exploit given time, including one particularly sleep-depriving spot where the car has been jacked ineptly. This will be repaired as a

priority, but the fine tier of rust that has already formed on the freshly exposed metal is a stark reminder of an Integrale's discreet fragility.

I'll miss it. Hammering down the outside lane of the M1 amid torrential rain, hustling along frosty lanes on winter morns – it's been colossal fun. The feral design and ebullient way it goes down a road make it a proper companion.

It goes up roads quite well, too, including a supposedly closed Horseshoe Pass at Llangollen. It's no exaggeration to say that the car crested the pass quickly and without fuss, utterly alone, in heavy snow, and on summer tyres. Call me a fool, but the Lancia vindicated my foolishness in some style.

G78 BBK will be back in Fast Fleet in the summer – a season when it becomes something of a giant mechanised scarab, scuttling down baked B-roads and slingshotting off roundabouts with ferocious enthusiasm, snorting from those peashooter exhaust tips as it goes along. Until then, it's arrivederci. ■

Richard Lane (@\_rlane\_)

Date acquiredAugust 2013Total mileage88,022Mileage this month657Costs this month£13.50 (Selina oil)mpg this month22.7

#### McLaren 12C Spider

Great car, the 12C, but can the SSO resist the temptation of the newer and quicker 650S Spider?

THE McLAREN 12C Spider has had plenty of use over the past several weeks.
Other than the daily commute, it was pressed into service for multiple last-minute Christmas shopping trips and even an airport run – the front boot does hold a surprising amount, especially if you pack it carefully.

Winter mode is still being used plenty and I had to add a bit of air to the rear tyres to make sure they had adequate pressure when cold. The roof has mainly stayed up, with the exception of two occasions. What I have done regularly, though, is drop the rear window to let in a bit of fresh air and the symphonic mechanical soundtrack.

Driving a 12C Spider every day, you do get spoiled. And when excellence is the norm, you don't realise how good it is until you have to step into something very ordinary again. In my case it's usually a rental car on a business trip that provides the grounding. The 12C's dual-clutch gearbox is simply outstanding. Shifts in both directions are lightning fast and I really like being able to use either paddle to go up or down. The driving position and cockpit layout are other strengths. All the controls are right where you want them to be. In fact the layout is highly intuitive even to the extent that you don't need to take your eyes off the road to find anything – unlike in a lot of cars, you don't need to

go hunting to figure out where the wipers or lights might be hiding.

The McLaren would have been used even more during this time were it not for the excellent local official McLaren dealer, Park Place. Just before Christmas they called up and asked if I would be interested in borrowing a 650S for a few days. My immediate answer was of course 'yes', and I arranged to collect the car the next day.

When we pulled up at the dealership, there were Tarocco Orange (pictured) and black 650Ss parked out front. My better half looked at me and said: 'Tell me we are borrowing the black one.' That would be a negative, but after several days we both agreed that the Tarocco Orange had really grown on us. The 650S is a very tempting proposition – the suspension is a bit more compliant than the 12C's and you do notice the extra torque.

At this point, though, I can't see myself trading in the Spider for a 650S, especially as I've only had the former for a few months. However, if McLaren came out with a 'GTR' or special edition 650S, that would make for a tempting addition.

Secret Supercar Owner (@SupercarOwner)

August 2014
1200
214
£0
18.0





#### Subaru WRX STI

A month in, and after an uncertain start with his new long-termer, has Gallagher yet managed to excavate the excitement of Imprezas of old?

I WANT TO like the WRX, honestly I do, but no matter how many miles I cover in it or what drives I have in it, I still walk away disappointed. This feeling hasn't been helped these past few weeks by an influx of test cars passing through the **evo** car park that have only highlighted the WRX's shortcomings.

One car that particularly demonstrated everything that is wrong with the WRX was Dickie Meaden's Mégane. It didn't take many miles to come to the conclusion that the Trophy performs exactly how I expected the WRX to, with the French flyer delivering those thrilling moments that Scoobys of old would serve up time and again with every drive. But where the Trophy feels alive and alert, the WRX

feels lethargic and leaden. The hot hatch's control weights are spot on, too, with the surfaces you come into contact with being both tactile and welcoming compared with the featherweight and lifeless feel to every element you engage with in the process of driving the saloon.

There have been a few glimmers of hope, namely late at night when the roads are quiet and the opportunities are more forthcoming to stretch the WRX's legs. Hook a series of corners together and you can just about get the STI to engage with you and involve you in what is going on. But you need all the stars to align, for the flat-four motor to be operating in its sweet spot and the chassis to be hooked up to your every input. And then, just maybe, the car begins to shine.

'Hook a series of corners together and you can just about get the STI to engage and involve you' But the amount of effort required to reach this point is neither matched by a suitable reward nor worth the sacrifices you have to make to get there, such as the cheap-feeling cabin and a ride quality so poor that the wife asked if Subaru had deliberately set out to make it feel like the wheels are square.

Fuel aside, the WRX hasn't cost a penny to run so far, although the fuel filler release broke the other day, which makes refuelling an expletive-filled affair every 250 miles.

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

Date acquired	December 2014
Total mileage	8418
Mileage this month	2059
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	25.6



#### Ferrari 458 Italia

A worrying rattle has blotted the hard-working 458's reliability record

BACK IN NOVEMBER last year, the 458 thrilled its 8000th customer on 6th Gear Experience's supercar driving events. This prompted me to take a closer look at the car's durability over the last three-or-so years.

Given that yours truly is behind its button-festooned wheel most days, hammering up and down the M1, and adding to that the aforementioned heavy track use throughout the year, the surprise conclusion was that the more WX11 had been used, the more reliable it had become.

Sure, this Ferrari and I have had our ups and downs, as with most relationships. I'm pretty sure it takes pleasure in deafening me with its party-piece faulty exhaust valve act, which leaves it stuck permanently in Race mode until I can get the car to a dealer. On the other hand it



makes me smile when pedestrians hear the red beast approaching and step back onto the kerb. And I'll say it again: the 458's pace is astonishing.

I still crossed my fingers last May when the three-year warranty ran out, hoping fervently that there would be no nasty surprises. So you can imagine my mood a couple of weeks ago when the V8 developed a top-end clatter and our in-house technicians shook their heads.

However, every cloud has a silver lining, and a chance conversation with a Ferrari technician revealed the 458 has in fact got a *four* year manufacturer warranty. So I was straight on the phone to Graypaul Nottingham, and that's where the car is now. Fingers crossed it's a

relatively simple fix, like a fuel pump, say. More news next time.

#### Simon George

(@6gearexperience)

Date acquired	May 2011
Total mileage	61,292
Mileage this month	344
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	16.0

Nissan GT-R



IT'S BEEN A quiet month for Stealthzilla, with family holidays and freezing conditions making recreational driving a low priority. But the new year is always a good time to think about plans for the months ahead, and so I've been pondering on the future for my GT-R.

It is getting on a bit now, at nearly

six years old, but that's a lot younger than certain other Fast Fleet jalopies I could mention, and with only 37,000 miles on the clock it's a long, long way from retirement yet.

I'm not convinced about taking the engine beyond Litchfield Stage 4.5, which it has been running faultlessly for over two years now. Raising power to 850bhp, which is the next stage, would mean some pretty serious gearbox modifications and I'm loath to spend thousands on an upgrade that at best would not be noticeable and at worst would be noisier and jerkier. Anyway, V-max events aside (evo 203), there aren't many circumstances when 720bhp feels particularly inadequate.

I'm also very happy with the Litchfield suspension kit, which provides the perfect compromise between handling and ride quality.

In fact, my only gripe at present is with the Endless brake pads I've been running since 2013. They are indeed endlessly powerful and fadefree on track, but despite following the correct bedding-in procedure for the then-also-new 400mm Alcon discs, the brakes have always juddered under sustained heavy braking. This only disappears once they've had a chance to cool down.

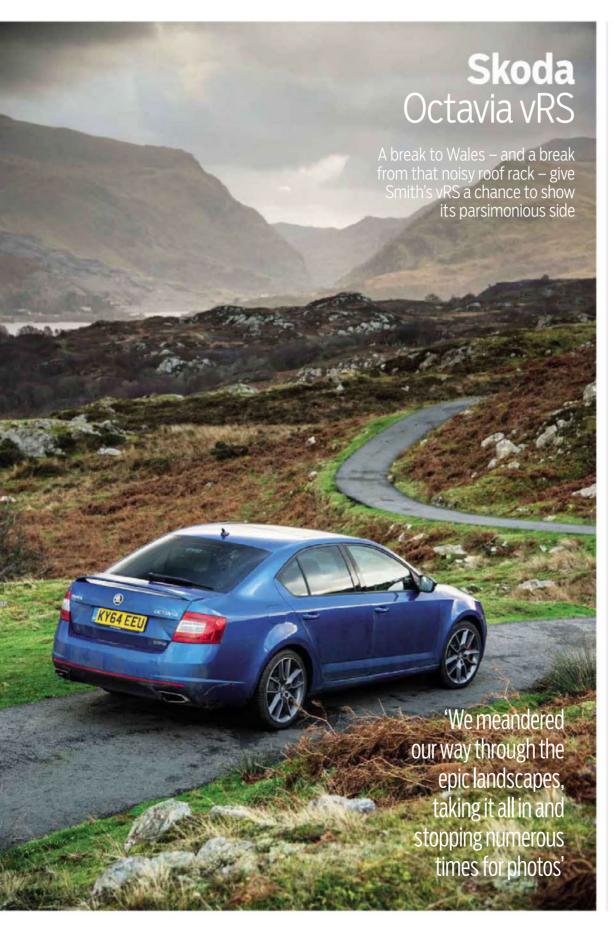
But worse, the rear pads (MX72 street-and-track compound rather than the MEO race compound at

the front) seem to be incorrectly sized and rattle like the exhaust has broken off its mountings and is banging on the floorpan. The noise is so bad that I've taken to lightly left-foot braking when driving down populated roads to avoid the embarrassment of people staring at my broken Nissan.

I would switch back to Carbonetic R Spec pads, which I've used many times to great effect, but firstly the Endless set-up cost an eyewatering £894, so I'm reluctant to relinquish it before I have to, and secondly, Carbonetics are extremely hard to come by, especially as the UK distributor appears to have changed recently. Oh well, first-world problems, as they say...

David Yu (@AutoJournals)

Date acquired	April 2009
Total mileage	36,934
Mileage this month	193
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	17.6



IT WAS A tough decision to remove the roof rack for the 250-mile trip to the ever-brilliant Brynteg luxury caravan park in Snowdonia, our home for the next four days. It was a toss-up between driving for four hours with the equivalent of tinnitus or having to listen to my wife for the duration of the drive.

As usual, the motorway miles in KY64 EEU were a piece of cake; heated seats on, sunroof open for the first time ever, wind tickling my folically challenged head and cruise control locked-on at a speed that felt like we were actually making some progress, Easy.

Perhaps too easy? It's hard to resist the lure of going cross-country through Snowdonia, no matter what you're driving. An 'executive decision' was made early on not to drive like what's left of my hair was on fire, and so we meandered our way through the epic landscapes, taking it all in and stopping numerous times for photos. It was genuinely enjoyable and by the time we reached Brynteg, the vRS had managed 39.8mpg!

Since our break in Wales, the roof rack hasn't made another appearance and I'm regularly seeing over 39mpg. With much improved fuel economy and a total lack of wind cacophony, I can't see myself putting it back on anytime soon, even if I do have to faff with my bike to get it into the hatchback.

In non-sunroof news, I've resorted to using my TomTom satnay over the car's built-in system. The Skoda's Columbus nav is actually very good and easy to use, but it never dynamically diverts your route when there are delays – even massive delays of more than an hour. That's hugely frustrating. I'm not the only one to have found this irritating either, as other owners have reported it. I've seen this problem in other VW Group cars, too. It's a shame, as this one setback spoils an otherwise great system.

Dean Smith (@evoDeanSmith)

September 2014
10,196
3243
0
39.8







and the same

**Left:** gold – the holiest of colours for Scooby alloys and, in this case, shod with winter tyres. **Below:** first it was the turbo, then the engine. So much for bulletproof reliability...

**NEW ARRIVAL** 

#### **Subaru** Impreza Turbo

Monte Carlo or bust? Bust...



To be honest, as soon as Jethro came up with the idea I felt my wallet twitch. Why? I have a big love for Imprezas. My career as a motoring journalist kicked off in 1997 – a time when the Impreza Turbo was king. Photographer buddy Nick Dimbleby and I spent weeks on assignment driving around the UK in his red Turbo – indelible and fond memories. And nostalgia being a cruel and expensive drug, I soon found myself negotiating with the owner of the blue Impreza here.

V209 NVX was in our industry, so to speak. Owned by *Car Dealer* magazine, it had been part of a series of features. Mechanically strong, if a little tatty, and with good history, it seemed perfect. Oh, and it was blue, which meant it was double-perfect. I bought it unseen, as I had my Clio V6 and my Porsche 911 SC before. Neither had let me down – I was obviously on a roll.

Soon after we had agreed on a figure (£2250), the seller told me that a final check-over had revealed the turbo was kaput. It was now just over a week before we were due to leave for the Monte and a replacement was proving difficult to find, so the seller suggested, and I agreed, that we should get the existing turbo reconditioned (at the seller's expense). So, seven days before the Monte, the turbo was sent off to be worked on. At this time, I realised I couldn't be part of the adventure due to some family dramas. However, the ball was rolling and I was happy for anyone else on the team to take the car. Jethro and Dickie declined, the savants...

The countdown was on. The turbo came back three days before Monte departure day and was fitted the next day. Two days to go...

Then I realised that the Subaru should really be wearing winter tyres, as the Monte stages had just received a proper dumping of snow. I called everyone I know – and I mean



everyone – to beg, borrow, steal or even pay for a set of winter tyres. No joy. It turned out the Subaru was on later 'bug-eye' Impreza 17-inch alloys and nobody had the right size 17-inch winter tyres in stock. Vredestein UK offered a set of 16s, but I'd have to buy some 16-inch wheels. Argh!

Immediately I scoured eBay for a set of 16-inch Impreza alloys. I found some – albeit 100 miles away in Stoke-on-Trent – and hallelujah they were gold! I bought them on the spot and asked friend of the mag Hamish McAllister to fetch them.

The next day (Thursday) the Impreza was delivered to **evo** Towers, as were five brand new Vredestein Wintrac Xtreme S winter tyres (more info at vredestein.co.uk) and a set of four gold Impreza

alloys. I was away from the office, so designer Will Beaumont took delivery and subeditor Ricky Lane went to get the wheels and tyres fitted.

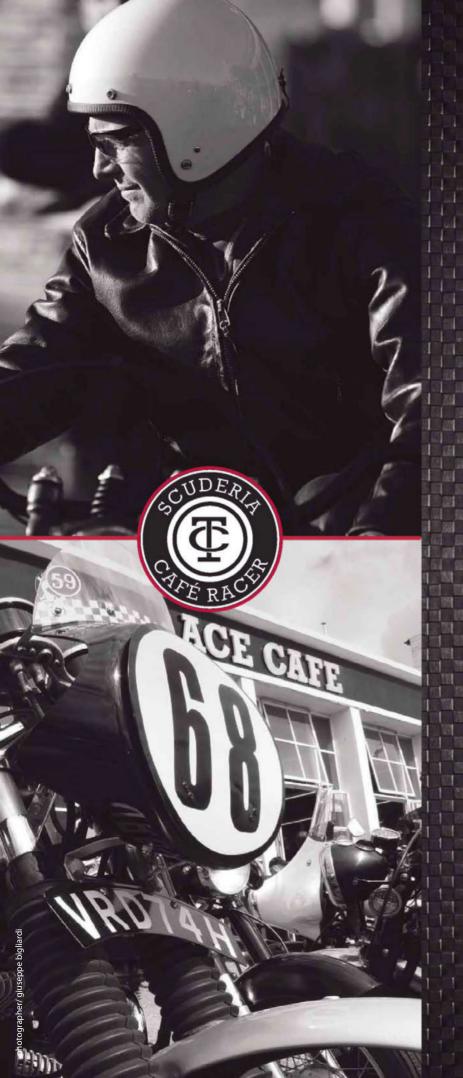
That night, Will took the car home to give it a good run in advance of embarking on the Monte adventure the next morning, and while there was a suspicion that the brakes would need replacing after returning, the car was running absolutely fine.

With the ferry booked for midday, Will left home in Leicestershire at 4am on the Friday. At 4.10am the Impreza was stranded, having suffered a colossal overheat. A few hours later, local mechanical heroes Paragon Auto (paragonauto.co.uk) inspected it and gave me the bad news. The engine was dead. Done for. Finished. Oh. Bugger.

On the Monday I saw the car for the first time, sitting outside our office, looking very sad. And so, for a while, was I.

Nick Trott (@evoNickTrott)

Date acquired	January 2015
Total mileage	
Mileage this month	86
Costs this month	
mpg this month	n/a





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THE KIA HAS always been a great car for transporting me and my photography equipment around the UK - it's one of those cars that simply functions without any hassle. But having already covered the numerous features that make the GT a top

daily driver, lately I've been thinking about it more in terms of pure, simple fun.

One mental checklist of what makes a decent hot hatch later. and it's clear that the Kia has most of the boxes ticked: great looks. loads of modern gadgets, sporty

Recaro seats and an encouraging performance spec.

The only trouble is that, when I do get the chance to drive some of evo's favourite roads in the Kia, it doesn't encourage me enough to push harder – so much so that I regularly find myself taking the

motorway home from the office. This is in marked contrast to the evening I took home Henry's Ford Fiesta ST. That thing was great fun, displaying amazing agility, precision and speed, all set to a brilliant four-cylinder soundtrack. The only negative was the £30 of petrol that was meant to last me two days disappearing completely in that one trip home!

I think the fact that I own a Mk2 Golf GTI 16v - which itself will soon be joining Fast Fleet – doesn't help matters. I've always enjoyed smaller, lightweight hot hatches more than faster but heavier ones.

Nevertheless, I'm not giving up on the GT and plan to remove all of my photographic equipment - not least the metal stepladder that travels with me most days - and get to some great roads over the upcoming weeks for a fresh feel for the car's performance.

Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott)

Date acquired	May 2014
Total mileage	16,406
Mileage this month	1011
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	30.1

SEAT Leon Cupra 280

#### **SEAT** Leon Cupra 280

This month, a fix for the iffy DAB reception, some new rubber, and a curiously low fuel economy figure

Petrolhead column recently (evo 204), switching on our Cupra's heated rear screen would always silence the DAB radio. The current Leon doesn't have an aerial poking up from its roof or one of its wings; instead it's in the rear screen and looks very much like the heating elements that it sits close alongside. So with digital signals being the temperamental things they are to hang on to, I just assumed

AS YOU MAY have read

in Richard Porter's

SEAT got in touch a couple of days after the article appeared to ask if it could take the car back briefly to

this behaviour was the result of

interference and was completely

investigate. This it duly did, tracing the fault to the rear screen itself. With a new one fitted, DAB and demisting can now work together in perfect harmony, which at this time of year is rather handy.

Also handy at this time of year is the four fresh 235/35 R19 Bridgestone Potenzas RE050As the car returned on. SEAT obviously took pity on us, as the original set were a smidge off their wear indicators all round, so were about due for replacement. They had lasted particularly well, though, having covered nearly 14,000 miles, with a tactical front/rear swap at around 6000 miles. That's an impressive showing given the torque they have to cope with and the fact that



KU14 WWB is frequently driven with considerable enthusiasm.

Speaking of which, you may have noticed that this month's mpg figure has dipped considerably below its normal 30-32 range. I'd love to offer an explanation, but I honestly don't think I've driven any differently this last few weeks. SEAT's delivery driver did mention that he really enjoys driving the new Cupra, though... Ian Eveleigh

Above: the Leon's aerial sits discreetly alongside the heater elements in the rear glass - clever, when it's working

Date acquired March 2014 Total mileage 14,547 Mileage this month 791 Costs this month £615.96 (tyres), £17.99 (oil top-up) mpg this month 27.8

normal. Turns out it isn't.

# WILLIAMS

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#### **BMW** M4

Despite less-than-favourable conditions, our M4 won last month's coupe group test. But some less-than-perfect rivals helped...

THERE'S A PUB on the North York Moors called the Lion Inn. It sits atop Blakey Ridge, a rugged spine that runs north to south. During the dark winter months the Lion Inn feels bleak and isolated, like Father Ted's house in a November squall, and back in 2010 a heavy, unforecast snowfall cut the pub off from the nearby villages.

Being exposed as it is to North Sea winds, deep snowdrifts built up against the pub's doors and windows, leaving the staff and a couple of guests trapped for several days. Actually, given all they did for a week or so was gorge themselves on the kitchen's supplies while drinking the cellar dry, 'trapped' seems like the wrong word. The whole ordeal sounds bloody marvellous.

Anyway, the point is that Blakey Ridge can experience some truly Scandinavian winter weather, often without warning. It would, therefore, 'It was exactly the kind of road the M4 hates and it did feel like a right old handful at times'

Date acquiredOctober 2014Total mileage9210Mileage this month1783Costs this month0mpg this month24.2

take a grunting moron to plan a group test of circa-450bhp sports coupes there during January.

In the event, I got away with it. There were just enough breaks in the fog and the icy rain showers for us to photograph last month's Lexus RC F v Audi RS5 v BMW M4 showdown, but the conditions never did allow the pair of rear-wheel-drive cars to show off their best assets. Nonetheless, it was the M4 that won Henry Catchpole's favour, albeit by a narrow margin against less-thanstellar competition.

As I've written in previous Fast Fleet reports, the M4 has a narrow operating window; on anything other than dry, largely flat roads, its dynamic shortcomings become all too apparent. The Blakey Ridge road, always slippery at this time of year, is cresting and uneven. It's exactly the kind of road the M4 hates and it did feel like a right old handful at times.

The RS5 was much more stable

over the tricky, spiky blacktop, and it found better purchase on the greasy road surface, too, while the RC F was less aggressive in its power delivery. Although the M4 was undoubtedly much harder work over those roads, it was the only one of the three that felt more like a proper sports car and less like a soft-focus grand tourer. The M4 is the best car in its class, but – unlike the V8 M3 that came before it – its grasp of that particular title isn't an unbreakable one.

After a few thousand road miles and a day of filming at the Bedford Autodrome for a YouTube video, the M4's rear boots are toast. As I type there are at least six or seven weeks of winter left, so I'm pondering a switch to cold-weather tyres to see if I can bring some much needed control to the rear axle in these chilly, wet conditions. In the meantime, I'm off to the Lion Inn and crossing my fingers for snow.

**Dan Prosser** (@TheDanProsser)



#### **PORSCHE CARRERA GT 2006**



Supplied in 2006 this is a one owner rare and collectable supercar. Finished in Sand White from the factory with Terracotta Leather. The paint work is original with light weave visible across the car. The car has full Porsche main agent service history. The supplying dealer has maintained this car from new with a total of seven services and a clutch only 1,500 klms ago.

The car was last serviced at Reading Porsche in January 2015.

#### **BOWLER EXR S 2014**



2014 Bowler EXR S only 1,900 miles finished in Bonetti Grey over Black. The car has a supercharged version of the 5.0 V8 in order to deliver astounding all terrain performance. The EXR S is all about performance.

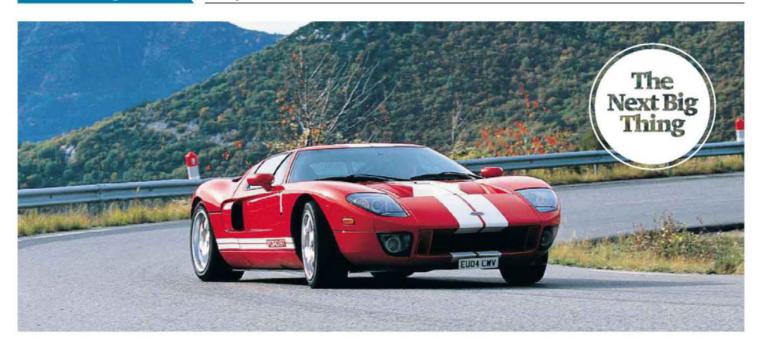
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# Market Watch

Knowledge

Insights into the used car market



#### **FORD GT**

Rare American supercar is not just a great drive, but also a promising investment



potential to be 'the next big thing'.

Built in a short production run of 4038 cars, the first 21st century Ford GT was a modern-day, road-going homage to the legendary 40-inch-tall GT40 endurance racer of 1964 to 1969, Gulf-liveried versions of which became especially synonymous with the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

With hindsight, the Ford GT might have been something of a bargain. Priced at around \$150,000 in the US, or £125,000 in the UK, it featured a 550bhp, 5.4-litre supercharged V8 mated to a six-speed Ricardo gearbox. Top speed was 205mph, with 0-60mph dusted off in just 3.7 sec.

Initially the cars commanded a premium of around a third more than the list price – especially in the UK where only 28 were officially allocated – but, as is usually the way, when the next must-have came along (and the Lehman Brothers crash of 2008 gave everyone the jitters), values temporarily dipped well below £100,000.

That seems absurdly little money for such

a car nowadays, especially when it has 'future classic' written all over it. Indeed, GTs are now appearing in classic auctions, where the best, low-mileage examples are easily outstripping presale estimates. In the last 12 months alone, two mollycoddled, delivery-mileage examples have fetched well over \$400,000 (c£265,000) apiece in separate RM Auctions sales.

The good news is, however, that moderately used UK cars – if you can find one – are currently hovering around the £130,000-150,000 mark. We doubt they'll stay there for long.

Simon de Burton

#### In the classifieds



#### 2005 Ford GT

**c£159,000** fordgtsales.com 10,000 miles, white, blue stripes, BBS wheels, McIntosh stereo upgrade, one owner. California. USA



#### 2006 Ford GT

**c£159,000** autosportsfl.com 17,963 miles, Tungsten Gray Metallic, Ebony Black leather, McIntosh stereo. Florida. USA



#### 2005 Ford GT

**c£165,000** fantasyjunction.com 8576 miles, red, white stripes, black leather, all options, 3M film, no track use. California. USA

#### Or consider...

#### Ford GT40

The original GT40 has assumed blue-chip classic status. A handful to drive, claustrophobic to be inside and far from ideal for daily use, a good road-going example without race history will cost you north of £1.5m.

#### **KVA GT40**

Although no longer made, the KVA GT40 replica was a good quality, glassfibre kit. An expertly built example can be had for around £30,000.

#### **Superformance GT40**

Top-quality continuation car from the only company licensed by trademark holder Safir GT40 Spares to use 'GT40' on its cars. Prices from £117.600 new.

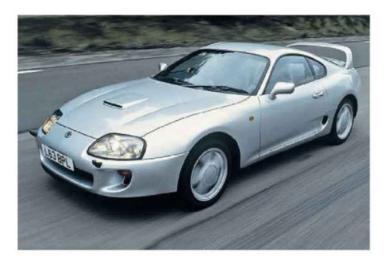
# Market Watch

Knowledge

Insights into the used car market

#### Ask the expert

Your buying questions answered



I live in Australia and have recently got my learner's permit, so want to start saving for my first car. I'm looking for a cheap (to buy and run) evo car that I can just enjoy driving. My price limit is around A\$10,000 (c£5400) and I was thinking along the lines of a Toyota Supra or an E46 BMW 3-series, as they look fun to drive and are aesthetically pretty nice as well. Bear in mind, though, that new solo drivers here are not allowed to drive cars with a power-to-weight ratio above 177bhp/ton. Any advice would be greatly appreciated.

Sebastian Skoutas



I think starting out with something rear-wheel drive is a great idea, so both of your suggestions are appropriate.

Assuming Japanese cars in Australia haven't rusted in the way they used to

up here, I'd say a 1992-2002 Mk4 Supra [pictured – although you didn't get the bonnet vent down under] would be an interesting choice, and with a little hunting should be within your budget.

The 220bhp non-turbo version will allow you to hone your driving technique without too much unexpected excitement – the twin-turbo model would break your bhp/ton limit, anyway. Find a five-speed manual car rather than an auto, as it will get the most out of the straight-six engine.

A Supra should make for a great first car. And at the risk of sounding like one of the 'you've never had it so good' brigade, I'd like to mention that my first road car was a Bedford HA (a Vauxhall Viva-based van). Rear-wheel drive, 1256cc, a gearbox like a hot knife through butter and no weight at the back. Loved it... SdB

Email your question to experts@evo.co.uk

#### Just looking

The pick of the classifieds this month



Renaultsport Clio 172 £2495 KTR Car Sales, Dorset ktrcarsales.co.uk 01202 820800 The Clio 172 frequently finds itself on **evo**'s pages – it's one of our all-time favourites, after all – but rarely does it appear in prefacelift guise. Yet for some enthusiasts the earlier car holds a special appeal.

Amongst the ingredients that set it apart is its use of a throttle cable, which some say gives better engine response than the phase 2's drive-by-wire system. It also weighs 1035kg – 22kg less than the facelifted car – and has a more pliant ride, thanks in part to its dinky 15in wheels. Ideal for tackling bumpy British B-roads.

With just 51,000 miles on the clock and an all-original interior and exterior, this year-2000 example has clearly been looked after. And with new brakes and a full service history included in the price, it looks like a safe buy for the future.

Sam Sheehan (@evoSam Sheehan)



Porsche 911 Turbo £29,995 Paul Stephens, Essex paul-stephens.com 01440 714884 The 996 was the first water-cooled Porsche 911, and the first blank-sheet model after three evolving generations of the original. In Turbo form its 3.6-litre flat-six produced 414bhp at 6000rpm and 413lb ft of torque from 2700 to 4600rpm. Sending power to all four wheels, it could arrive at 62mph in just 4.2sec when equipped with the six-speed manual gearbox. Top speed was 189mph.

With 79,000 miles on the clock, this 2003 Turbo appears to have aged well. Wearing immaculate bodywork and wheels, and a spotless engine bay and interior, it's clear it has lived a privileged life. It's also managed to retain all of its original interior components, including a Bose sound system and factory-fit satnav.

Just £30k seems like a bargain for this modern supercar, and an example so tidy will almost certainly go up in value. **S**5

#### Trader chat

#### Twisted Automotive twistedautomotive.com

Although the December 2015 demise of Land Rover's legendary Defender is well and truly on the horizon, Charlie Fawcett, founder of Yorkshire-based Defender customisation specialist Twisted, is in an optimistic mood, as newcomers to the so-called 'best 4x4 by far' are suddenly realising how much they want one.

'The recent uplift in awareness of the Defender has been incredible,' he says, 'and Land Rover has really boosted the

attention on our market with the launch of the three special-edition run-out models. The Autobiography version is particularly relevant to us, because it is similarly priced to some of our high-end T-Range models and it has made people realise that a great deal can be done with a Defender. As a result, we are receiving more enquiries than ever before.

'The important difference with what we do, however, is that we not only improve

the look and performance of the standard vehicle, but we do extensive work to preserve it. too.

'It's ironic that production is set to come to an end just when the Defender is cooler and more sought-after than it has ever been in its 67-year history. We're getting enquiries from everyone – from people who have never before considered owning a Defender, as well as from die-hard Land Rover fans. It's a very interesting time.'



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# **Buying Guide**

Knowledge

Your indispensable resource when buying used

#### Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG 2006-2011



AMG's first completely bespoke power unit is just one reason to love the mid-noughties E63

Words: Peter Tomalin

REPLACING THE BRUTALLY quick and charismatic E55 AMG was never going to be easy. Its torque-rich supercharged 5.5-litre V8 – shared with such **evo** icons as the SL55 AMG – was the stuff of legend. The answer? For the next

generation, Mercedes would give AMG free rein to build a completely new power unit, the first truly bespoke AMG engine. The result was the M156, a naturally aspirated 6208cc V8 that, when installed in the W211-generation E-class, produced a searing 507bhp.

Launched in autumn 2006, the new E63 AMG (saloon or wagon) was the most powerful E-class to date, capable of rocketing from 0 to 62mph in just 4.5sec in saloon form (quite something for a 1765kg leviathan), and while top speed was limited to 155mph in standard form, with the restrictor removed the E63 was hammering on the door of 200mph.

Sure, the 6.2-litre engine needed stoking to give its very best, but there was no doubt it was a mighty unit. The rest of the hardware was all about harnessing its might while making the E63 as civilised as a limo in city traffic. So you got a seven-speed multi-mode automatic gearbox with paddles for manual shifting, switchable air suspension, simply massive ventilated disc brakes and all manner of electronic goodies.

Three years later, in late summer 2009, Mercedes replaced the W211 with the W212. Behind the squarer snout was the same 6.2-litre V8 but with peak power slightly up, at 518bhp. It came with even more modes for the drivetrain and suspension (steel springs now at the front, for extra agility) and an 'AMG' button to call up your favourite settings. Carbon-ceramic brakes became an option, too.

This E63 ran until 2011, when Mercedes/AMG reverted to forced induction, as is the modern way. Twin turbos would see the V8 shrink to a familiar 5.5-litre capacity again, although the E63 name was retained. Power was unchanged at 518bhp initially, but in 2013 would rise to 549bhp, with a humungous 531lb ft of torque from just 1750rpm.

But it's the naturally aspirated cars we're focusing on here, and with prices from as little as £14k, they're a lot of extremely rapid motor car for the money. Here's what you need to know.

#### **Checkpoints**

## Engine and transmission

Our guide is Olly Stoner, boss of Mercedes specialist Prestige Car Service and the man behind benzonthegreen. co.uk (this year's event is on May 16). He says that while the E63 is a rare beast, the M156 engine appears in many models and is generally trouble-free provided it has 10,000-mile oil changes with the recommended Mobil 1. Early on, however, it developed a reputation for snapping its head bolts, with occasionally catastrophic results if coolant got into the combustion chambers. Most engines have had the bolts replaced but it's important to be aware of the issue the early symptoms are similar to head gasket failure. Also, listen for a tappety noise - common when the engine's cold, but if it continues it means the hydraulic lifters are sticking and potentially causing premature wear to the cam lobes. Replacing the lifters will cost £2000 at a specialist and considerably more at a dealership, but ignoring the signs is potentially a lot costlier.

Like the engine, the seven-speed auto 'box is generally robust and reliable, provided it's properly maintained. That means a fluid change at 40,000-mile intervals. Just check the changes are smooth, particularly downchanges.

# Suspension, steering, brakes

All E63s have air suspension (though only at the rear on the later W212 model) and, while generally reliable, Olly says he occasionally finds leaking struts and inefficient compressors – if the pump is noisy or takes an age to lift the car from the lowest to the highest ride height, it's probably on the way out. Because it's a heavy car, front lower ball joints and suspension arms can wear out, so listen for any clonks over bumps on the test drive. Also check the discs and pads to make sure there's plenty of life left in them (replacing a full set will cost around £2000!).

### Body, interior, electrics

No corrosion issues as yet, so you're checking for signs of accident repairs – inconsistent panel gaps, overspray, etc. Make sure any interior wear is commensurate with the recorded mileage and spend time checking that all the electronics are fully functioning, as any repairs or replacements are sure to be costly. Desirable options include front and rear parking sensors, the Comand infotainment system and the Harman Kardon hi-fi upgrade.





1: V8 generally robust. 2: brakes pricey to refresh. 3: check for smooth downshifts



#### What we said



#### First drive, October 2006

'The new engine can't match the angry, instant torque of the outgoing one. As a result the E63 feels slightly slower when you prod the throttle, but the pay-off is much crisper and more accurate response, a chassis that can exploit what's on offer rather than simply try to stave-off the engine's excesses, and a wonderful charge up to the red line.

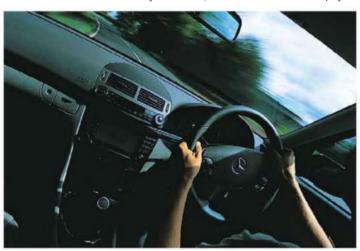
'It may not have quite the reach of the M5's V10, but it's still an eye-widening, buttock-clenching experience at full charge. And when the BMW is just beginning to climb its torque curve. the E63 is already thumping you in the chest.

'The seven-speed Speedshift 'box punches upshifts through with an almost DSG-like quality; downshifts are less successful, but you can smooth any shunt with a bit of heel-and-toeing something that is very satisfying.

'Dynamically, the weak link is the steering, which is both too light and too slow to respond to small inputs. It makes the E63 feel a little reluctant to turn in and gives the impression there's more understeer than there really is. Pushed hard, the E63 does start to drift wide, but in the main it's very neat, and surprisingly agile.' - evo 096



Above: traction control can't be fully deactivated, but it still allows the driver to play...



**Above:** if the E63 has an obvious weakness it's the steering, which feels slow and light

#### 'I bought one' James Jewiss

'I bought my 2006 E63 a year ago with 54,000 miles on the clock and it's now covered 74,000. It has the factory Performance Package, so it puts out 550bhp and an extra 74lb ft. It also has the optional carbon splitter, front spoiler and rear diffuser, and uprated brakes.

'My car is on 20-inch alloys - the second set, as potholes destroyed three of the wheels last year. On either of the Sport suspension settings the

ride is unforgiving on anything but the smoothest tarmac. It's probably happiest on the Autobahn! The 18s or 19s would offer a more comfortable ride.

'Rear tyres last around 5000-6000 miles, the fronts at least twice that. The temptation to floor the throttle is immense, as is switching off the traction control in a deserted car park!

'The car has been absolutely reliable. I've found maintenance costs more

reasonable than with a BMW M5. Economy? I'll see 14mpg on a bad day but up to 25mpg on a motorway trip.

'I can drive it all day long in Comfort mode, or if the mood takes me it's into Sport Plus, which lowers the car and stiffens everything up. The sprint to 62mph has been GPS timed at 3.9sec and the car is delimited, so can hit 198mph. I can't think of another car that offers so much bang for the buck!'

#### In the classifieds



#### 2007 (07) saloon

- 93,000 miles
- Silver/black
- ♣ Sports exhaust♣ Comand nav system
- darkpandacars.co.uk

£14,441



#### 2007 (07) saloon

- ₽ 73,000 miles
- Tenorite Grey/black
- Panoramic roof
- Harman Kardon hi-fi
- moorelands.com

£17,950



#### 2008 (08) estate

- **■** 27,000 miles
- Obsidian Black/black
- Demo plus one owner ■ Seven seats
- burford-carsales.co.uk

£24,990

#### The rivals

With a magnificent 5-litre 500bhp V10 engine, the E60 M5 (2004-10) is one of the great supersaloons. Yours from £15k.

#### **Audi RS6**

For top E63 AMG money (high £20ks) you'll find the C6 RS6 (2008-10), with its extraordinary 572bhp 5-litre biturbo V10.

#### Jaguar XF SV8/XFR

The rare (and really rather good) 410bhp SV8 can be had for £14k-18k. The more sporting 503bhp R starts at around £19k

#### **Specification**

#### Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W211)

**Engine** V8, 6208cc

**Max power** 507bhp @ 6800rpm Max torque 465lb ft @ 5200rpm **Transmission** Seven-speed automatic,

rear-wheel drive Weight 1765kg

Power-to-weight 292bhp/ton **0-62mph** 4.5sec (claimed) Top speed 155mph (limited) Price new £66,545 (2006)

#### **Parts prices**

(Prices from prestigecarservice. co.uk. Tyre price from blackcircles. com. All prices include VAT but exclude fitting charges)

Tyres (each) £156 front, £155 rear (Michelin Pilot Sport 3)

Front pads (set) £230.40 Front discs (pair) £1150.20 Spring/damper unit £343.20

Cat £1065.60 OS, £2539.20 NS Centre pipe/rear silencer £831.60 OS,

£978 NS Spark plugs (set) £84 Air filter £35.32

#### Servicing

(Prices from prestigecarservice. co.uk. including VAT)

Every 10,000 miles, alternating minor and major services

Minor service (oil, filter, etc) £200 Major service from £300, depending on schedule

#### What to pay

Early W211 E63s start at around £14k privately, but tread carefully. We'd recommend an inspection by a specialist to make sure no big bills lie in wait. James Jewiss's car ('I Bought One'), massively specced and clearly loved, is on pistonheads.com for just under £18k, which is the top end for an '06/'07 car. An '08/early-'09 car with low to average miles and a full history is going to be low-tomid £20ks, while W212 cars (summer '09 onwards) currently start at around £30k.

#### Useful contacts

- mbclub.co.uk (forums, advice, events) benzworld.org (forums, advice,
- classifieds)
- mbworld.org (US forums, advice) ■ mercedes-amg.com (official AMG community)
- prestigecarservice.co.uk (servicing, tuning, parts)
- classicandperformancecar.com (ads)





Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV Ceramic Brakes High Level Rear Wing Larini Sports Exhaust 5,000 miles 2009 **2POA** 



Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV Ceramic Brakes High Level Rear Wing Small Decal option 4,000 miles 2009 **£POA** 



Lamborghini Diablo Magnesium Wheels Jota Edition Unique Limited Edition 21,875 miles 1996 POA



Lamborghini Diablo 6.0 VT Final Edition Carbon Fibre Driving Zone, Carbon Fibre Inserts Carbon Fibre Engine Bay, 20,000 miles, 2000, £164,990



Lamborghini Murcielago V12 LP640-4 Coupe 670 SV Body Upgrade DPE 20 Inch Forged Alloys TUBI Exhaust 5,000 miles 2008 £164,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP 640 Roadster Bicolour interior Ceramic Brakes Egear 10,000 miles 2008 £149,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP 640 Roadster LHD Carbon Fibre Driving Zone Clear Engine Bay Cover Ceramic Brakes 7,000 miles 2009 £144,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Roadstar LH Titanium Hercules Alloys Yellow Brake Calipers Lifting Gear 10,000 miles 2008 £134,990



Lamborghini Murcielago VT Roadster Colour SatNav Lifting Gear Egear, Tubi Sports Exhaust 10,000 miles 2005 £119,990



Lamborghini Gallardo Qcuitura Stitching Full Electric Heated Seats Reverse Camera 13,000 miles 2008 £79,990



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Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Spyder eGear Black Calisto Alloys, LP560 front, Branding pack, Qcuitura Stitching, 19,000 miles, 2007, £78,990



Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Spyder Ceramic Brakes Reverse Camera Egear 26,000 miles 2007 £74,990



Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Spyder eGear HIGH SPEC Lifting Gear, Reverse Camera, Calisto Alloys, 8,000 miles, 2008 £69,990



Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Spyder Manual Colour SatNav, 20 Inch Alloys, Reverse Camera, 32,500 miles, 2006, 266,990

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# Market Watch

Knowledge

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#### **Auction watch**

## A racing 911 and a pair of Ferrari 250s stood out in February's auctions







R

RM AUCTIONS PUT on a good show at its Paris event on February 4, posting sales of €19million (c£14m). The top seller was a 1963 Ferrari 250 GT/L Lusso Berlinetta (pictured above left), which went for €1,624,000 (c£1.2m), while a further four

cars all passed the €1m mark.

Ahead of the auction, **evo's** Richard Meaden headed to the test track and had a drive of a rather special Porsche 911 that was entered in the sale. Built in 1969, this track-prepped 911 S (pictured top) has an interesting history behind it. One of six produced, it originally left the factory with modifications intended for rallying. First driven by Pauli Toivonen and Martti Colari in the 1969 Acropolis Rally in its original 2-litre form, it won the event by an impressive 1 minute and 32 seconds ahead of the second-place car, proving this 911's effectiveness as a rally weapon.

The car was then sold to its first private owner, the French racing driver Jean Claude Lagniez, who entered it in various French rallies before selling it on to another racer, who decided to take it circuit racing. It was entered into the Le Mans 24 Hours three times, and at each subsequent visit the car had a few more upgrades. At its final appearance in 1972 it was in the state of tune seen here today, with a 2.5-litre flat-six putting out around 275bhp.

RM put an estimate of €1.1m-1.3m (c£815,000-964,000) on this special 911, but it failed to sell on the day. Watch our video on YouTube.com/evo and you can find out why we're surprised nobody put in a winning bid.

Two days after the RM sale, French auction house Artcurial captured the public's imagination with the incredible 'barn-find' sale. The huge collection of highly desirable but neglected classics sold for a total of €25.1m (c£18.6m). The crown jewel in the sale was a Ferrari 250 GT SWB California Spider (above right). Discovered in a garage, buried under piles of French car magazines for many years, the valuable Ferrari sold for €16.3m (£12.1m).

Matthew Hayward (@evoMatthew)

#### **Auction results**



#### Anglia Car Auctions, February 31

**2000 Aston V12 Vantage** £19,530

**1995 BMW M3 (trackday car)** £3780

**1982 Ferrari 308 GTSi** £53,550

1983 Ford Fiesta XR2 £9240

1989 Mercedes 190E 2.5 Cosworth Auto £4200

1999 Porsche 911 C4 £11,130 1998 Subaru Impreza

WRX Prodrive £3990

#### RM Auctions, Paris, February 4

1990 Ferrari F40 c£872.000

1977 Lancia Stratos HF

Stradale c£126.400

1969 De Tomaso Mangusta

c£124,500 **2000 BMW Z8** 

c£137,000 **1989 Porsche 911** 

Speedster c£132,800

1989 Lamborghini Countach 25th Anniversary c£245 000 1964 Porsche 904 Carrera GTS c£1.058.000

1982 Lancia 037 Stradale (pictured) c£249,000

(pictured) 05,249,000 1992 Porsche 911 (964) Carrera RS

c£150.000

#### Bonhams, Paris, February 5

2002 Mercedes ML55 AMG

£5300

1997 Mercedes 500SL

£4200

1990 Fiat X1/9 Gran

Finale £3000

#### Auction calendar

#### March 7

Historics at Brooklands Weybridge, UK historics.co.uk

#### March 7

Anglia Car Auctions King's Lynn, UK angliacarauctions.co.uk

#### March 10

Coys London, UK coys.co.uk

#### March 12

Bonhams Amelia Island, USA bonhams.com

#### March 13

Gooding & Co Amelia Island, USA goodingco.com

#### March 14

RM Auctions Amelia Island, USA rmauctions.com

#### March 19

DVCA Dorchester, UK dvca.co.uk

#### March 21

Bonhams Goodwood, UK bonhams.com

#### April 4

Anglia Car Auctions King's Lynn, UK angliacarauctions.co.uk

#### Fantasy garage



Three eye-catching SUVs for a notional £185,000.

All can be found in the classifieds at classicandperformancecar.com



#### Mercedes-Benz 280GE £13.000

This orange example of the go-anywhere G-wagen dates from 1985 and has the über-thirsty petrol engine.



#### Jeep Wrangler CJ300 £34,994

Finished in black, this as-new Jeep has had the Kahn treatment inside and out but remains mechanically stock.



#### Startech Range Rover Sport £134,850

New Rangie Sport not big enough for you? This wide-body conversion from Germany's Startech should do the trick...









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# Tried & Tested

Knowledge

The best motoring products, put through their paces by the **evo** team



#### UNILITE PROSAFE LED INSPECTION LIGHT

#### £49.95 torchdirect.co.uk

Working on a car in a dimly lit workshop can be a nightmare. Dropped bolts, difficult to reach parts and annoying shadows: they can all make late nights under the bonnet incredibly tiresome.

Unilite's Prosafe LED Inspection Light has been designed with those dimly lit situations in mind. With 750 lumens of brightness – equivalent to 1 million candles – it's far more than just an extra bright torch.

Using high-powered 10-watt LEDs and featuring a reflective body for added visibility, the light can illuminate objects as far as 20 metres away. Rather than scattering its light across an entire room, the tube's reflective backing helps keep light focused, ensuring none is wasted in brightening those otherwise invisible areas

Despite its power it weighs just 850g,

and its substantial 420 x 49mm size is industry standard for inspection lights. It comes complete with a 230V mains power plug with a five metre cable, and does without an on/off switch, instead working as soon as the power's connected.

Other useful features include its rubberised body and a rotating nylon hook, improving its chances of surviving workshop knocks and enabling it to be hung from almost anything.

Using the LED light back to back with conventional fluorescent lights, the difference is significant. At almost £50 it's far from cheap, but it's a sizeable item and as a long-lasting, durable source of illumination, it's perfect for the job. And if all else fails, it doubles up as a lightsabre

Sam Sheehan (@evoSamSheehan)

#### **AUTO FINESSE ILLUSION SHOW CAR WAX**

#### £74.95 autofinesse.co.uk

An owner's choice of car detailing product is often a very personal thing – ridiculously so. Almost all evidence that pushes or pulls us towards a particular brand and influences our decision—making is anecdotal, too, so often the only way to settle on a favourite is trial and error.

Happily, this latest arrival hits the spot right away. 'Illusion' sits towards the top of Auto Finesse's seven-strong range of waxes and claims to have red paintwork 'glowing like a molten pool of lava' and metallic flakes 'sparkling like diamonds in the sun'.

I can't vouch for former, but I doubt the Imperial Blue coat on my Focus RS has ever shone with the same deep lustre before. It really does look superb, and the last car to which I applied Illusion – a black Lancia Integrale – is still merely a quick wash away from gleaming devilishly six weeks later. Water beading is also fairly spectacular, although

Illusion isn't unique in this respect.

Almost half of the 200ml tub is top-grade carnauba wax, which is a higher proportion than Swissvax's popular Mirage polish (£115) and helps justify Auto Finesse's significant asking price. The strawberry-liquorice-blended-with-shoe-polish scent is sickly sweet (and oddly addictive), but the real attraction of Illusion is how astonishingly easily it goes on and buffs cleanly off. There's an oily quality to it that means a little goes a long way and after two coats – which took just 40 minutes, half of which was waiting time – the glint on my car was as luscious as the wax's scent.

Wax isn't the only thing Auto Finesse supplies, and its all-in-one 'Tripple' polish (£7.95) also works extremely well as an alternative to something like Autoglym's Super Resin Polish, going on and off effortlessly and leaving a properly glossy finish.

Richard Lane (@\_rlane\_)





#### **NEXTBASE INCARCAM 101**

#### £49.00 halfords.com

Type 'Russian dash-cam' into YouTube, and you'll quickly realise how many accidents are caught on camera in Eastern Europe. While they appear to create little more than internet crash compilations, they can actually be useful evidence to help prove innocence.

Nextbase's dinky InCarCam 101 is amongst the smallest cameras on sale. It's light – about half the weight of an iPhone – but still features a two-inch display. The fisheye lens is able to record a wide-angled 120 degrees, enabling full coverage of the nose of the car in full 720P HD quality. It comes hooked to a suction mount, and attaches to either a USB or 12-24V cigarette charger.

It's simple to use, too: in the case of an accident, the camera, which has to be manually switched on, can be

commanded to remember the latest journey with a simple click of a button. This recording can then be downloaded to your computer via a mini-SD card (which unfortunately doesn't come supplied).

If the camera is to be a permanent feature in your car, the requirement to run a wire to either a USB port or the cigarette charger can prove annoying. We'd therefore recommend running a live extension to wire into the battery.

Though road accidents are fortunately less common this side of the European continent, running a dashcam could undoubtedly prove useful if your luck runs out. If you're in the market for a camera, Nextbase's 101 certainly deserves a place on your shortlist.

Sam Sheehan (@evoSamSheehan)









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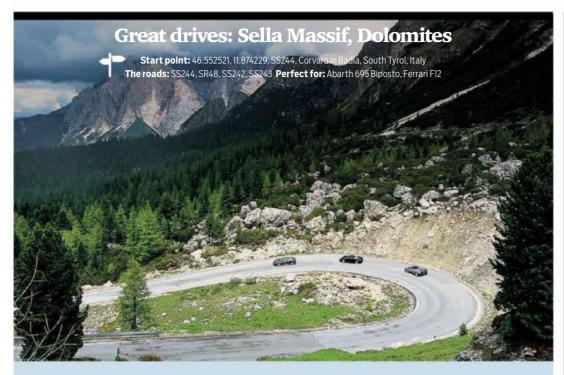
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# Trips & Travel

Knowledge

The best destinations to visit in your car



OUIZ OUESTION: WHAT were the Dolomites called before the 19th century? No? They were called 'The Pale Mountains' or, in Italian, Monti Pallidi. There's a fairytale about how they got their pale hue. Suffice it to say it involves a prince, a trip to the moon and some dwarves.

Anyway, nestled amongst the distinctive carbonate rock of the Dolomites are some incredible driving roads. You could choose any number of routes, but a good place to start is the tarmac encircling the Sella massif. I've only driven the loop once, on the Ferrari FF launch, but I've also cycled some of it and evo went to the Gardena and Sella passes in evo 082 when we took a Carrera GT, a Zonda F and an F430 up there.

Starting in Corvara and heading south, you dive straight into the tightly packed hairpins of the Passo Campolongo, which have a ski lift running overhead. This leads you to Arabba, where you head west for the Passo Pordoi. The road isn't quite wide enough for a white line down the middle, but it doesn't feel too cramped either. The highest mountain in the region is the Piz Boè, which rises to 3152m. However, from the Pordoi pass you can take a funicular to the top of the 2950m Sasso Pordoi.

Where the Campolongo and Pordoi seem to wend their way through relatively open pastures, the Sella pass is tucked up right underneath the towering edifices of the mountains (the Sella Towers) and has a more impressive feel as a result. The Gardena pass is arguably the prettiest of the lot (although they're all stunning) and forms the last stretch back

to the start in Corvara. At just 32.5 miles it might not sound like a very long loop, but the road never seems to run straight or flat so you're constantly busy. Add in the relentlessly changing but always mesmerising views of the South Tyrol and it's an absolute gem.

> **Henry Catchpole** Features editor



#### **M** The route



#### Start/finish Distance: 32.5 miles Time: 1 hour



The last time I went to the Dolomites. I staved just north of Corvara in Badia. The hotel was the Melodia del Bosco, which was modern. clean, comfortable and generally punched well above its three-star rating. If you want to be on the road itself, you could try the Hotel Passo Pordoi or the Hotel Cir, both of which boast stunning views.

#### Watch out for

During winter and spring, snow obviously turns the mountains a whiter shade of pale and some of the roads become impassable. There are also two days a year (generally in June and September) when the loop is closed to cars and besieged by cyclists. There are plenty of other wonderful roads to explore in the Dolomites; I'd head for the Passo Giau.

For more driving destinations, visit: evo.co.uk/track-and-travel

#### Reader road trip

#### Scandinavian delights

Rather than taking the usual pilgrimage down to the Alps in my Porsche 968 CS, last year I decided to take the long trek north, up into Scandinavia. Driving across mainland Europe is always a joy, and Denmark and Sweden were quickly crossed using the rather impressive bridges that link them.

Once in Norway, twisty roads appeared almost immediately, but the really fun roads were yet to come.

As I started heading north along the country's west coast, the scenery and roads became ever more spectacular. I found that not only are Norway's fjords jaw-droppingly



beautiful, but they are also usually surrounded by pristine, empty mountain roads. Did I mention the weather was good as well?

Highlights of the trip were taking the early ferry to Songesand before getting dropped off at a completely deserted 30-mile ribbon of bumpy tarmac that ebbed and flowed through a pure, unspoilt wilderness.

We stopped for lunch along the Fv520. admiring the Røldalsvatnet Lake and the surrounding snow-capped mountains. The road leading up to the Geirangerfjord is also magic. Fast, smooth and requiring a committed driver, it's just the kind of road my 968 CS thrives on.

As the trip came to an end, things seemed to be going unerringly well – too well, in fact. On the way back home, about 3 miles from the ferry port, my 968 suffered its first breakdown in the nine years I've owned it. Thankfully the Dutch breakdown service quickly had my clutch hose repaired. It did, however, seem that after driving nearly 4000 miles, the 968 was protesting about having to go back to the UK after having had such a good time in

#### Marvin Keeble

Email your story to henryc@evo.co.uk





# Database

■ = new entry this month. \* = grey import. Entries in italics are for cars no longer on sale. Issue no. is for our most recent major test of the car (D = Driven, R = Road test or group test, F = Feature). Call 0844 844 0039 to order a back issue. Price is on-the-road including VAT and delivery charges. Engine is the car's main motor only — additional hybrid tech isn't shown. Weight is the car's kerb weight as quoted by the manufacturer. bhp/ton is the power-to-weight ratio based on manufacturer's kerb weight. 0-60mph and 0-100mph figures in bold are independently recorded, all other performance figures are manufacturer's claims. CO2 g/km is the official EC figure and EC mpg is the official 'Combined' figure or equivalent.

#### Knowledge

#### Superminis / Hot Hatches

	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Maxmph	CO2g/km	EC mpg	<b>evo</b> rating	
Abarth 595 Competizione	196 D	£18,960	4/1368	158/5500	170/3000	1035kg	155	7.4	-	130	155	43.5	+ Spirited engine, still looks great - Favours fun over finesse	***
Abarth 695 Biposto	205 R	£32,990	4/1369	187/5500	184/3000	997kg	191	5.9	-	143	-	-	+ Engineered like a true Abarth product - Desirable extras make this a £50k city car	****
Alfa Romeo Mito Cloverleaf	149 R	£18,870	4/1368	168/5500	184/2500	1145kg	149	7.5	-	136	139	47.1	+ Great MultiAir engine, impressive ride - Not as feisty as we hoped	****
Alfa Romeo Giulietta QV	199 D	£28,120	4/1742	237/5750	251/2000	1320kg	182	6.0	-	151	162	40.3	+ Still looks good, and now it's got the 4C's engine - Pricey, and it has more rewarding rival	s ****
Afa Romeo Giulietta Cloverleaf	144 D	70-74	4/1742	232/5500	251/1900	1320kg	179	6.8	-	150	177	37.2	+ Shows signs of deep talent but should be more exciting	***
Alfa Romeo 147 GTA	187R	'03-06	6/3179	247/6200	221/4800	1360kg	185	6.0	15.5	153	-	23.3	+ Mx1Focus RS pace without the histonics - Signtly nose-heavy	***
Audi S1	203 R	£24,900	4/1984	228/6000	273/1600	1315kg	176	5.8	-	155	162	40.4	+ Compliant and engaging chassis; quick, too - Looks dull without options	***
Audi A1 quattro	191 R	73	4/1984	253/6000	258/2500	1420kg	791	5.7	-	152	199	32.8	+ Polished 253bhp all-wheel-drive A1 - Just 19 for UK, Porsche Cayman price	****
Audi S3	188 R	£30,640	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1395kg	216	5.4	12.5	155	162	40.4	+ Lots of grip and one of the best-sounding four-pot turbos - Still a little too clinical	***
Audi S3	106 R	'05-12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1455kg	183	5.6	13.6	155	198	33.2	+ Very fast, very effective, very err, quality - A little too dinical	****
Audi RS3 Sportback	156 R	71-12	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1575kg	216	4.5	-	755	-212	31.0	+ Above, with added tive-pot character - Again, see above	****
BMW 125i M Sport	176 D	£26,020	4/1997	218/5000	228/1350	1420kg	156	6.4	-	155	154	42.8	+ Performance, price, running costs - Dull four-pot soundtrack	****
BMW M135i	195 R	£30,835	6/2979	316/5800	332/1300	1425kg	225	4.8	12.9	155	188	35.3	+ Powertrain, noise, chassis, price - M235i looks nicer, and has an LSD on its options list	****
BMW130iMSport	106 R	'05-10	6/2996	261/6650	232/2750	1450kg	193	6.1	15.3	155	-	34.0	+ Fantastic engine - Suspension can still get a little boingy	****
Citroën C1/Peugeot 107/Toyota Aygo	126 R	£8095+	3/998	68/6000	68/3600	790kg	87	14.2	-	98	103	61.4	+ Full of character and insurance-friendly - Insurance friendly power	****
Citroën Saxo VTS	020 R	'97-'03	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	935kg	130	7.6	22.6	127	-	34.9	+ Chunky, chuckable charger - Can catch out the unwary	****
Citroën AX GT	195 R	87-92	4/1360	85/6400	86/4000	72.2kg	120	9.2	-	110	-	-	+ Makes terrific use of 85bhp - Feels like it's made from paper	****
Citroën DS3 1.6 THP	142 R	£17,475	4/1598	154/6000	177/1400	1240kg	126	7.2	-	133	155	42.2	+ A proper French hot hatch - Petrolheads might find it too 'designed'	****
Citroën DS3 Racing	153 D	71-12	4/1598	204/6000	203/2000	1240kg	167	6.5	-	146	149	-	+ Faster, felst ler version of above - Not as hardcore as its 'Racing' tag suggests	***
Flat Panda 100HP	132R	'06-71	4/1368	99/6000	97/4250	975 g	103	9.5	-	115	154	43.5	+ Most fun per pound on the market - Optional ESP can't be turned off	****
Fiat Punto Evo Sporting	141 D	£13,355	4/1368	133/5000	152/1750	1155kg	117	8.5	-	127	129	50.4	+ Great engine, smart styling - Dynamics don't live up to the Evo name	***
Ford Fiesta ST	196 D	£17.250	4/1596	179/5700	214/1500	1088kg	167	7.4	18.4	137	138	47.9	+ Chassis, price, punchy performance - Not as powerful as key rivals	****
Ford Fiesta ST Mountune	195 R	£17,894	4/1596	212/6000	236/2750	1088kg	198	6.6	-	140	138	-	+ One of the best mid-sized hatches made even better - Badge snobbery	****
Ford Pesta Zetec S	123 D	'08-'13	4/1596	118/6000	112/4050	1045kg	115	9.9	-	120	134	48.7		***
Ford Pesta Zetec S Mountune	132R	'08-'13	4/1596	138/6750	125/4250	1045kg	130	79	-	120	134	48.7		****
Ford Flest a ST	075 D	'05-'08	4/1999	148/6000	140/4500	1137kg	132	7.9	-	129	10-7	38.2		****
Ford Pesta ST 85 Mountune	115 R	08	4/1999	185/6700	147/3500	1137kg	165	6.9		129	-	-	+ Flest a ST Ret's the power it always needed - OTT exhaust note	***
Ford Focus ST TDCi Estate	206 D	£23,295	4/1997	182/3500	295/2000	1488kg	124	8.3	-	135	110	67.3	+ Performance not sacrificed at the alter of economy - Interior design still jars slightly	****
Ford Focus ST	188 R	£21,995	4/1999	247/5500	265/1750	1362kg	184	6.5	16.8	154	169	-	+ All-round cracking hot hatch. Good value, too - There's a bit of torque-steer	****
Ford Focus ST Mountune	187 D	£23,220	4/1999	271/5500	295/2750	1362kg	202	5.7	10.0	154+	169	_	+ Great value upgrade - Steering still not as feelsome as that of some rivals	****
Ford Focus ST	119 R	05-10	5/2522	222/6000	236/1600	1392kg	162	6.7	16.8	150	224	30.4	+ Value, per formance, intermy - Big engine compromises handing	***
Ford Focus ST Mountune	137 R	'08-11	5/2522	256/5500	295/2500	1392kg	167	5.8	14.3	155	224	50.4	+ ST takes extra power in 1s still de - You probably still want an RS	****
Ford Focus RS (MC)	195 R	09-71	5/2522	300/6500	324/2300	1467kg	208	5.9	14.2	163	225	30.5		****
Ford Focus RS500	191 R	70-71	5/2522	345/6000	339/2500	1467kg	239	5.6	12.7	165	225	30.3	+ Me pow r and presence than regular RS - Mey	****
Ford Focus RS (Mr.)	195 R	02-103	4/1998	212/5500	229/3500	1278kg	169	5.9	14.9	144	223	-	+ Some _egr _t- Some _eaw _l _so make sure _u _u _v e plen _v)	****
Ford Escort RS Cosworth	157R	92-'96	4/1993	224/6250	224/3500	1275kg	179	6.2	14.9	137	-	-	+ The ut mate Essex not hat ch - Unmodified ones a grare, and getting pricey	****
Ford Puma 17	095 R	97-02	4/1679	123/6300	116/4500	1273kg 1041kg	120	8.6	27.6	122	-	38.2	+ Everything - Nothing. The 4 is worth a look to o	****
The state of the s	128 R	'00-'01	4/1679	153/7000	119/4500		132	7.8	23.2	137	-	34.7		
Ford Racing Puma		07-11				1174 kg				146			+ Exclusivity - The standard Puma does it so well	****
Honda Civic Type R	102R		4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	6.8	17.5	146	215	31.0	+ Lows grant, VTEC more accessible - Steering and seed, in a total and e	***
Homa Civic Type R Champ ship White	126 D	'09-10	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	126/kg	158	1.75	-	4 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10	-	31.0	+ Limited-slip of fa well ome adolf on - It's not available on standard car	****
Honda Civic Type R Mugen	195 R	09-11	4/1998	237/8300	157/6250	1233kg	195	5.9	-	155	-	31.7	+ Fantastic on road and track - There's only 20, and they rea tad pricey	****
Honda Civic Type R	075 R		4/1998	197/7400	145/5900	1204kg	166	6.8	16.9	146			+ Potent and great value - Looks divide opinion, duff steering	****
Kia Proceed GT	186 D	£19,995	4/1591	201/6000	195/1750	1448kg	143	7.4	-	143	171	38.2	+ Good chassis, appealing price - Thrashy engine	***
Lancia Della Integrale	194 R	'88-93	4/1995	207/5750	220/3500	1300kg	162	5.7	-	137	135	239	+ One of the finest cars ever built - Demands love, LHD only	****
Mazda 21.5 Sport	132 R	£13,495	4/1498	102/6000	101/4000	1030kg	107	10.4	-	117		48.7	+ Fun and funky - Feels tinny after a Mini	****
Mazda 3 MPS	137 R	'06-13	4/2261	256/5500	280/3000	1385kg	198	6.3	14.5	155	224	29.4	+ Quick, eager and very good value - The steering's Iffy	***
Mercedes-Benz A250 'by AMG'	173 D	£29,355	4/1991	208/5500	258/1200	1370kg	154	6.5	-	149	148	46.3	+ Mercedes builds a proper hot hatch - But denies it a manual gearbox	****
Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG	194 R	£37,845	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1480kg	244	4.3	10.6	155	161	40.9	+ Blisteringly quick everywhere - Not as rewarding as some slower rivals	***
MG3 Style	190 D	£9999	4/1498	104/6000	101/4750	1155kg	91	10.4	-	108	136	48.7	+ Decent chassis, performance and price - Thrashy engine, cheap cabin	***
MG Metro 6R4 Clubman	181 R	'84-87	6/2991	250/7000	225/6500	1000kg	254	4.5	-	140	-	-	+ The most extreme not hatch ever - Engine noise, neat soak, five mpg	****
Mini Cooper (F56)	194 D	£15,300	3/1499	134/4500	162/1250	1085kg	125	7.9	-	130	105	62.8	+ Punchy three-cylinder engine, good chassis - Tubby styling	***
Mini Cooper S (F56)	196 D	£18,665	4/1998	189/4700	206/1250	1160kg	166	6.8	-	146	133	49.6	+ Still has that Mini DNA - Expensive with options; naff dash displays	***
Mini Cooper SD 5-door (F56)	204 D	£20,050	4/1995	168/4000	265/1500	1230kg	139	7.4	-	140	109	68.9	+ Driving experience very close to the three-door car - The three-door looks better	****
Mini John Cooper Works Coupe (R58)	164 R	£23,805	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1175kg	180	6.3	-	149	165	39.8	+ The usual raucous Mini JCW experience - But with a questionable 'helmet' roof	****
Mini Cooper (R56)	185 F	'09-14	4/1598	120/6000	118/4250	1075kg	113	9.1	-	126	127	52.3	+ Brilliant I de and composure; could be all the Mini you need - You li still buy the S'	****
Mini Cooper S (R56)	149 R	'06-14	4/1598	181/5500	177/1600	1140kg	161	7.0	-	142	136	48.7	+ New engine, Mini quality - Front end not quite as direct as the old car's	****
Mini Cooper SD (R56)	158 D	77-74	4/1995	141/4000	225/1750	1150kg	125	5.0	-	134	114	65.7	+ A quick diesel Mini with impressive mpg - But no Cooper S alternative	****
Mini John Cooper Works (R56)	184 R	'09-74	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1160kg	182	7.2	16.7	148	165	39.8	+ A seriously rapid Mini - Occasionally just a little unruly	****
Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56)	195 R	73-74	4/1598	215/6000	206/2000	1160kg	198	6.3	-	150	165	39.8	+ Brazenly hyperactive - Too much for some roads and some tastes	****
Mini Cooper S (R50)	077R	02-'06	4/1598	168/6000	155/4000	1140kg	143	7.8	19.9	135	-	33.6	+ Strong performance, quality feel- Over-long gearing	****
Mini Cooper S Works GP (R50)	144R	'06	4/1598	215/7100	184/4600	1090kg	200	6.5	-	149	-	32.8	+ Storming engine, ag if y - Tacky styling enhancements'	****
Nissan Juke Nismo	184 R	£20,495	4/1618	197/6000	184/2400	1306kg	153	7.7	19.5	134	159	40.9	+ More than the sum of its parts - Not enough to add up to a pukka hot hatch	***
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 2)		97-'98	4/1587	103/6200	97/3500	865 g	121	8.8		121	-	34.0	+ Bargain no-frills thrills - Not as much fizz as original 1.3	****



Official fuel consumption for the Volvo V40 T2 R-Design (manual) in MPG (I/100km): Urban 41.5 (6.8), Extra Urban 62.8 (4.5), Combined 53.3 (5.3). CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 124g/km. MPG figures are obtained from laboratory testing intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect real driving results.



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Best of the Rest
BMW's M135i is an enticing rear-drive alternative to the Golf R, although the Mégane 265/275 pips abth for absolute tactility and involvement. The Fiesta ST (left), meanwhile, is the default affordable hot hatch choice. We'd have ours Mountuned.

#### Superminis / Hot Hatches

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	C02g/km	EC mpg	<b>eVo</b> rating	
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 1)	095 R	94-96	4/1294	100/7200	80/5400	826kg	123	10.6	_	118	_	35.6	+ Frantic, thrashy fun - Needs caning to extract full potential	****
Peugeot 106 GTI 16v	034R	'97-'04	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	950kg	128	7.4	22.2	127	-	34.9	+ Fine handing supermini - Looks is are	****
Peugeot 208 GTi	184 R	£18,895	4/1598	197/5800	203/1700	1160kg	173	6.8	17.9	143	125	47.9	+ Agile chassis works well on tough roads - Could be more involving	***
Peugeot 208 GTi 30th Anniversary	205 D	£21,995	4/1598	205/5800	221/1700	1185kg	176	6.5	-	143	125	47.9	+ The most aggressive small hatch on sale - More expensive than a Fiesta ST	****
Peugeot 205 GTI19	195 R	'88-'91	4/1905	130/6000	119/4750	910kg	145	7.9	-	724	-	36.7	+ Still scintillating after all these years - Brittle build quality	****
Peugeot 306 GTI-6	020 R	93-01	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1215kg	139	7.2	20.1	140	-	30.1	+ One of the great GTIs - They don't make them like this any more	****
Peugeot 306 Rallye	095 R	'98-'99	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1199kg	142	6.9	19.2	137	-	30.1	+ Essentially a GTI-6 for less dosh- Limited choice of colours	****
Renautsport Twingo 133	175 R	'08-13	4/1598	131/6750	118/4400	1050kg	127	8.6	-	125	150	43.5	+ Renault sport experience for pocket money - Optional Cup chass is gives bouncy ride	***
Renaultsport Clio 200 Turbo	184 R	£18.995	4/1618	197/6000	177/1750	1204kg	166	6.9	17.9	143	144	44.8	+ Faster, more refined, easier to drive - We miss the revvy nat-asp engine and manual 'box	
Renaultsport Clio 200 Cup	195 R	'09-73	4/1998	197/7100	159/5400	1204kg	166	6.6	16.7	141	190	34.5	+ The hot Clio at it's best - They don't make it anymore	****
Renaultsport Clio 197 Cup	115 R	07-09	4/1998	194/7250	158/5550	1240kg	161	69	-	134	-	33.6	+ Quick, polished and capable - Not as much sheer fun as 182 Cup	***
Renaultsport Clio 182	066 R	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1110kg	165	6.6	17.5	139	-	34.9	+ Took not hatches to a new level - Flawed driving position	****
Renautsport Clio 182 Cup	187R	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.5	-	139	-	34.9	+ Full of beans, fant astic value - Sunday-market upholstery	****
Renaultsport Clio Trophy	200R	'05-06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.6	17.3	140	-	34.9	+ The most fun you can have on three (sometimes two) wheels- Just 500 were built	****
Renautsport Clio 172 Cup	048R	'02-'04	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1011kg	171	6.5	17.7	138	-	-	+ Bargain old-school not hatch - Nervous in the wet, no ABS	***
Renautsport Clio V6 255	057R	'03-'05	6/2946	251/7150	221/4650	1400kg	182	5.8	-	153	-	23.0	+ Supercar drama without the original's edgy handling - Uninspired interior	****
Renautsport Clio V6	029R	'99-'02	6/2946	227/6000	221/3750	1335 kg	173	5.8	17.0	145	-	23.0	+ Pocket supercar - Mid-engined handing can be tricky	***
Renault Clio Williams	195 R	93-'96	4/1988	148/6100	126/4500	98 kg	153	7.6	20.8	121		26.0	+ One of the best hot hatches ever - Can be fragile	****
Renault 5 GT Turbo	195 R	87-91	4/1397	118/5750	122/3000	855kg	140	7.3	20.0	120	-	28.4	+ Clio Williams' grand-daddy - Few unmout ed ones eft	****
Renaultsport Mégane 265 Cup	195 R	£25,990	4/1998	261/5500	265/3000	1387kg	191	6.4	14.8	158	174	37.7	+ A hot hatch benchmark - Not a lot	****
Renaultsport Megane 275 Trophy	201 D	£28,930	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1376kg	200	6.0		158	174	37.7	+ Another cracking Trophy model - Stripped-out Trophy-R is even more thrilling	****
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	201 D	£36,430	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1297kg	212	5.8		158	174	37.7	+ As absorbing as a 911 GT3 RS on the right road - Too uncompromising for some; pricey	****
Renaulsport Megane 250 Cup	139 R	'09-12	4/1998	247/5500	251/3000	1387kg	191	5.0	14.6	156	190	34.4	+ Fantastic chassispa tially obscured by new-found maturity	****
Renaul sport Mégane d'Ci 1/5 Cup	119 R	07-09	4/1995	173/3750	265/2000	1470kg	119	8.3	23.5	137	1910	43.5	+ A diesel with a genui - ly sporty chases - Could take more power	****
	195 R	07-09	4/1993	227/5500	229/3000		171	6.2	16.0	147	-	43.3		****
Renaul sport Mégane 20 F1 Team 26	200R	'08-'09	4/1998	227/5500		1345kg	189		15.1	147	-	-	+ The cartie R is based on - F1 Team to kers in dubious tast e	
Renaultsport Mégane R26 R			4/1998		229/3000	1220kg		5.8		131			+ One of the true not hatch heroes - Two seats, plastic rear windows	****
SEAT Ibiza FR 2.0 TDI	144 R	£17,445		141/4200	236/1750	1245kg	115	8.2	-		123 139	60.1	+ More fun than the petrol FR, manual gearbox option - The Cupra's not much more	***
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	183 D	£18,765	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1259kg	144	6.9		142		47.9	+ Punchy engine, unflappable DSG - Lacks engagement	***
SEAT Leon FR TDI 184	184 D	£22,255	4/1968	181/4000	280/1750	1350kg	136	7.5		142	112	64.2	+ Performance, sweet chassis, economy, comfort - Boorish engine	***
SEAT Leon Cupra 280	195 R	£26,940	4/1984	276/6000	258/1750	1320kg	212	5.8		155	149	44.1	+ Serious pace and ability for Golf GTI money - The Mk7 Golf R	****
SEAT Leon FR+	163D	71-12	4/1984	208/5300	206/1700	13.44 g	158	7.2	-	145	170	38.7	+ As quick as a Golf GTI tve-door but lots cheaper - Misses the VW's completeness	***
SEAT Leon Curra R	139 R	70-72	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1375kg	193	6.1	14.0	155	190	34.9	+ Bold car, blinding engine - Lacks the character of its rival mega-hatches	***
SEAT Leon Cupra	105 R	707-71	4/1984	237/5700	221/2200	1375 g	175	6.3	-	153	12.0	34.0		***
SEAT Leon Cup, a R 225	067R	'03-'06	4/1781	222/5900	206/2200	1376kg	164	6.9	-	150	-	32.1	+ Cross-country pace, practicality, value - Not as thrilling as some	***
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk2)	146 D	£17,150	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1218kg	148	7.3	-	139	148	45.6	+ Well priced, well made, with great engine and DSG 'box - Dull steering	***
Skoda Fabla vRS (Mk1)	077R	'04-'07	4/1896	130/4000	229/1900	1315kg	100	9.6	-	127	-	55.4	+ Fascinatingly fun and frugal not hatch - A little short on steering feel	***
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk3)	187 D	£23,260	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1350kg	163	6.8	-	154	142	45.6	+ Quick, agile, roomier than a Golf - Ride is harsh for what could be a family car	****
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk2)	163 R	'05-13	4/1998	197/5100	206/1700	1395kg	143	7.3	-	149	175	37.7	+ Drives like a GTI but costs much less - Green brake call pers?	****
Smart Fortwo Brabus	110 D	£15,375	3/999	97/5500	104/3500	780kg	126	9.9	-	96	119	54.3	+ Telling people you drive a Brabus - Them realising it's not a 720bhp S-class	***
Subaru Impreza STI CS400	146R	70-72	4/2457	395/5750	400/3950	1505kg	267	4.6	10.7	155		-	+ Cosworth kudos. One of the fastest hatches we've tested - Pricey. Lifeless steering	***
Subaru Impreza WRXS	125 D	'08-70	4/2457	251/5400	288/3000	1395kg	180	5.5	-	130	270	-	+ An improvement over the basic WRX - Still not the WRX we wanted	***
Subaru Impreza STI 330S	124 R	'08-10	4/2457	325/5400	347/3400	1505kg	219	4.4	-	155	-	-	+ A bit quicker than the STI but not better	***
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk2)	175 R	£13,749	4/1586	134/6900	118/4400	1045kg	130	8.7	-	121	147	44.1	+ The Swift's still a great pocket rocket - But it's lost a little adjustability	****
Suzuki Swift Sport	132 R	05-71	4/1586	123/6800	109/4800	1030kg	121	8.9	-	124	165	39.8	+ Entertaining handling, well built - Lacking in steering feedback	****
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	154 R	£18,995	4/1598	189/5850	192/1980	1166kg	165	6.8	-	140	172	38.7	+ Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feel, uncouth compared with rivals	***
Vauxhall Corsa VXR Nürburgring	164 R	71-13	4/1598	202/5750	206/2250	1166kg	176	6.5	-	143	178	-	+ VXR gets more power and a limited-slip diff - But it's over £3K more expensive	***
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk2)	195 R	£27,260	4/1998	276/5500	295/2500	1475kg	190	5.9	-	155	189	-	+ Better than the car it replaces; loony turbo pace - Lacks RS Mégane's precision	****
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mkl)	102 R	'05-11	4/1998	237/5600	236/2400	1393kg	173	6.7	16.7	152	221	30.7	+ Fast and furious - Lacks a little composure and precision	****
VW Up/SEAT Mii/Skoda Citigo	171 R	£7990+	3/999	59/5000	70/3000	854kg	70	14.1	-	99	105	62.8	+ Accomplished city car is dynamically soundbut predictably slow	****
VW Polo GTI	206 D	£18,850	4/1798	189/4200	236/1450	1280kg	150	6.7	-	146	139	47.1	+ At last, a real live 'n' kicking baby Golf GTI - Fiesta ST is still more engaging	****
VW Polo GTI	154 R	70-14	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1184kg	153	68	-	142	139	47.9	+ Modern-day mk1Golf GTI gets twin-clutch DSG - It's a little bit bland	***
VW Golf GTD (Mk7)	200 D	£25,765	4/1968	181/3500	280/1750	1377kg	134	7.5	-	143	109	67.3	+ Pace, fuel economy, sounds good for a diesel - Lacks the extra edge of the GTI	***
VW Golf GTI (Mk7)	195 R	£26,125	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1351kg	163	6.5	-	152	138	47.1	+ Brilliantly resolved - Mégane 265 beats it as a pure drivers' car	****
VW Golf GTE (Mk7)	202 D	£28,000	4/1395	201	258	1524kg	134	7.6	-	138	35	188.0	+ The most enjoyable plug-in hybrid at this price - Golf GTI still quicker and more fun	***
VW Golf R (Mk7)	203 R	£29,900	4/1984	297/5500	280/1800	1476kg	204	5.1	-	155	165	40.9	+ Time to take the R brand seriously - Mégane 265 to tedges it as a pure drivers' car	****
VW Golf GTI (Mk6)	172 R	'09-13	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1318kg	160	6.4	16.5	148	170	38.7	+ Still a very accomplished not hatch - 207bhp Isn't a lot any more	****
VW Golf R (Mk6)	140 D	70-73	4/1984	266/6000	258/2500	1521kg	178	5.5	-	155	199	33.2	+ Great engine, Tremendous pace and poise - High price, ACC only optional	****
VW Golf GTI (Mk5)	195 R	'04-'09	4/1984	197/5100	207/1800	1336kg	150	6.7	17.9	145	-	-	+ Character and ability: the GTI's return to form - Lacking firepower?	****
VW Golf R32 (Mk5)	087R	'05-'09	6/3189	246/6300	236/2500	1510kg	165	5.8	15.2	155	-	26.4	+ Traction's great and you'll love the soundtrack - We'd still have a GTI	***
VW Golf R32 (Mk4)	053R	'02-'04	6/3189	237/6250	236/2800	1477kg	163	6.4	16.3	154	-	24.6		***
VW Golf GTI 16v (Mk2)	195 R	'88-'92	4/1781	139/6100	124/4600	960kg	147	7.9	-	129	-	26.6		****
VW Golf GTI (Mk1, 18)	095 R	182-'84	4/1781	112/5800	109/3500	840kg	135	8.1	-	112	-	36.0	+ The car that started it a l- Tricky to find an unmolested one	***
Volvo C30 T5 R-Design	122R	'08-12	5/2521	227/5000	236/1500	1347kg	165	6.6	16.9	149	203		+ Good-looking, desirable Volvo - Lacks edge of best hatches. Avoid auto	***

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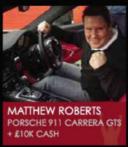


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Our Choice
BMW M5. The turbocharging of BMW's M-cars met with scepticism, but the current M5's 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 feels a perfect fit. It's a brutally fast car, and there are clever (and useable) adjustable driving modes. It looks cool, too. The best big saloon is now even better.



#### Best of the Rest

Jaguar's showy XFR-S (left) has a particularly impressive chassis, and Mercedes' E63 AMG offers intoxicating performance, especially with the S upgrade. BMW's M3 is an appealing allround package, while the latest Alpina D3 Biturbo is not only the world's fastest diesel production car, but a great handler too.

#### Saloons / Estates / 4x4s

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	ndm09-0	0-100mph	Мах трһ	CO2g/km	EC mpg	<b>evo</b> rating	
Alpina D3 Biturbo (F30)	192 D	£46,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	+ 173mph from a 3-litre diesel! Brilliant chassis, too - Auto only	****
Alpina B3 Biturbo (F30)	188 D	£54,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1610kg	255	4.2	-	190	177	37.2	+ Understated appearance, monster performance - E90 M3 is better on the limit	****
Alpha D3 (E90)	120 R	'08-12	4/1995	211/4000	332/2000	1495kg	143	6.9	-	152	-	52,3	+ Excellent chassis, turbodiesel oomph - Rather narrow powerband	****
Alpina B5 Biturbo	149 D	£75.150	8/4395	533/5200	538/2800	1920kg	282	4.5	-	198	244	26.9	+ Big performance and top-line luxury - Driver not really involved	****
Alpina B7 Biturbo	134 D	£98,800	8/4395	533/5200	538/2800	2040kg	265	4.6	-	194	230	28.5	+ Massive performance and top-line luxury - Feels its weight when hustled	****
Aston Martin Rapide S	201 D	£147,950	12/5935	552/6650	465/5500	1990kg	282	4.2	-	203	300	21.9	+ Oozes star quality; gearbox on 2015MY cars a big improvement - It's cosy in the back	****
Aston Martin Rapide	141 R	70-73	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1990kg	240	52	-	188	355	-	+ Better than its DB9 sibling - More a 2+2 than a proper four-seater	****
Audi S3 Saloon	192 D	£33.540	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1430kg	210	5.3	-	155	162	26.4	+ On paper a match for the original S4 - In reality much less interesting	****
Audi S4 (B8)	166 D	£39,610	6/2995	328/5500	324/2900	1685kg	198	4.9	-	155	190	34.9	+ Great powertrain, secure chassis - The new RS4 is here now	****
Audi S4 (B7)	073 D	'05-08	8/4163	339/7000	302/3500	1700kg	206	5.4	-	155	-	-	+ Effort less VB, agree handling - Lacks ultimate finesse of class leaders	****
Audi RS4 Avant (B8)	192 R	£56,545	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1795kg	251	4.5	10.5	174	249	26.4	+ Looks and sounds the part, thunderously fast - Harsh ride, unnatural steering	****
Audi RS4 (B7)	098R	06-08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1650kg	255	4.5	10.9		249	20.4	+ 414bhp at 7800rpm! And there's an estate vers on too - Busy under braking	****
	192R	'00-'02	6/2671	375/6100	325/2500	1620kg	236	4.8	12.1	170		17.0		
Audi R54 (B5)	101 R	94-95	5/2226				201	4.8	13.1	162	-	18.0	+ Effor less pace - Not in elast word in ag ty. Bends wheel ms	****
Audi RS2		'06-71		315/6500	302/3000	1595 g		52	13.1	155	299		+ Storming performance (thanks to Porsche) - Try Inding one	****
Audi S6	091D		10/5204	429/6800	398/3000	1910kg	228					22.4	+ Even faster, and discreet with it - Very mut d V10	
Audi RS6 Avant (C7)	203 R	£77,995	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1935kg	290	3.6	8.2	155	229	28.8	+ Performance, foolproof powertrain, looks - Feels a bit one-dimensional	****
Audi RS6 Av. nt (C6)	116 R	'08-10	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	2025kg	287	4.3	9.7	155	333	20.2	+ The world's most powerful estate - Power Isn't everything	****
Audi RS6 Avant (C5)	052 R	'02-'04	8/4172	444/5700	413/1950	1865kg	242	4.8	11.6	155	-	19.3	+ The ultimate estate car?- Numb steering	****
Audi RS7	190 D	£84,480	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1920kg	292	3.9	-	155	229	28.8	+ Stonking performance, great looks - Numb driving experience	***
Audi S7	171 D	£63,375	8/3993	414/5000	406/1400	1945kg	216	4.6	-	155	225	-	+ Looks and drives better than S6 it's based on - Costs £8000 more	****
Audi S8	164 D	£80,690	8/3993	513/5800	479/1700	1975kg	264	4.1	-	155	237	27.7	+ Quicker and much more economical than before - But still underwhelming to drive	****
■ Audi RS Q3	206 D	£45,495	5/2480	335/5300	332/1600	1655kg	206	4.8	-	155	203	32.1	+ Surprisingly characterful; better than many RSs - High centre of gravity	****
Bentley Flying Spur V8	200 D	£142,800	8/3997	500/6000	487/1700	2342kg	217	4.9	-	183	254	25.9	+ Effortless performance with real top-end kick - Determinedly unsporting	****
Bentley Flying Spur	185 D	£153,300	12/5998	616/6000	590/1600	2400kg	261	4.3	-	200	343	19.0	+ More power than old Flying Spur Speed - Feels its weight; engine sounds dull	****
Bentley Continental Flying Spur Speed	141R	'08-12	12/5998	600/6000	553/1750	2440kg	250	4.6	-	200	396	16.6	+ 600bno; surprisingly fun handling - Could look a bit more like it goes	****
Bentley Mulsanne	178 F	£229,360	8/6752	505/4200	752/1750	2610kg	197	5.1	-	184	342	19.3	+ Drives like a modern Bentley should - Shame it doesn't look like one too	****
BMW 320d (F30)	168 R	£29,475	4/1995	181/4000	280/1750	1495kg	123	7.4	-	146	120	61.4	+ Fleet-friendly new Three is economical yet entertaining - It's a tad noisy	****
BMW 328i (F30)	165 D	£30,470	4/1997	242/5000	258/1250	1430kg	172	5.8	-	155	149	44.8	+ New-age four-pot 328i is great all-rounder - We miss the six-cylinder soundtrack	****
BMW 330d M Sport (F30)	180 D	£36,975	6/2993	254/4000	413/2000	1540kg	168	5.6	-	155	129	57.6	+ Great engine, fine handling, good value - Steering confuses weight with feel	****
BMW 435i Gran Coupe	203 D	£41,865	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1585kg	194	5.5	-	155	174	34.9	+ Superb straight-six, fine ride/handling balance - 335i saloon weighs and costs less	****
BMW M3 (F80)	203 R	£56.190	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1520kg	284	4.3	-	155	204	32.1	+ The looks, performance and practicality - Engine lacks the character an M-car deserve	
BMW M3 (E90)	123R	'08-71	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1605kg	262	4.9	10.7	165	290	22.8	+ Every to t as good as the E92 M3 coupe - No carbon roof	****
BMW M3 CRT (E90)	179 R	71-12	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1580kg	285	4.4	,	180	295	_	+ Saloon chassis + weight savings + GTS engine = best FVO M3 - Just 67 were made	****
BMW 335i M Sport (E90)	134 R	'05-71	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1535kg	200	56	-	155	196	31.0	+ Stunning divetrain, controlled chassis - Looks a Dit steady	****
BMW 528i (F10)	164 D	£36,570	4/1997	242/5000	258/1250	1710kg	144	6.2	-	155	152	41.5	+ Four-pot 528 is downsizing near its best - You'll miss the straight-six sound effects	****
BMW 535i (F10)	141 D	£44,560	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1685kg	182	6.1	-	155	185	34.9	+ New 5-series impresses But only with all the chassis options ticked	***
BMW M5 (F10M)	165 R	£73,960	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1870kg	300	4.3	-	155	232	28.5	+ Twin-turbocharging suits all-new M5 well - Can feel heavy at times	****
		107-10	10/4999	500/7750			285	4.3	-	155	232	10.3		
BMW M5 Touring (E60)	105 R	'04-70	10/4999	500/7750	383/6100 384/6100	1780kg	289	4.7	10.4	155	-	19.5	+ Brilliant at lentents - Fers signify clumsy when pottering	****
BMW M5 (E60)						1755kg			7.65	1000			+ Close to being the ultimate supersaloon - SMG gearbox feels old-tech	****
BMW M5 (E39)	110 R	'99-'03	8/4941	394/6600	369/3800	1795kg	223	4.9	11.5		-	-	+ Magnificent V8-engined supersaloon - We'd be nit-picking	****
BMW M5 (E34)	110 R	92-'96	6/3795	340/6900	295/4750	1653kg	209	5.9	13.6		-	-	+ The Godfather of supersaloons - The family can come too	****
BMW M5 (E28)	182 R	86-88	6/3453	282/6500	251/4500	1431kg	200	6.2	-	151	-	-	+ The original storming sa oon - Understated looks	****
BMW M6 Gran Coupe	190 D	£98,145	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	299	4.2	-	155	232	28.5	+ Enormous performance, stylish looks - Price tag looks silly next to rivals, M5 included	****
BMW X5 M50d	191 D	£64,020	6/2993	376/4000	546/2000	2190kg	155	5.3	-	155	177	42.2	+ Straight-line pace - Driving experience identical to standard X5, despite the M badge	***
BMW X6 xDrive 50i	118 D	£63,065	8/4395	408/5500	442/1750	2190kg	186	5.4	-	155	292	22.6	+ Stunningly good to drive - Will you want to be seen arriving?	****
BMW X6M	134 D	£93,070	8/4395	547/6000	502/1500	2305kg	241	4.7	-	171	325	20.3	+ Fast, refined and comfortable - But it definitely lacks the M factor	****
BMW 750i	174 D	£71,575	8/4395	449/5500	480/2000	2020kg	226	4.7	-	155	199	-	+ Well specced, impressively refined - Lags far behind the Mercedes S-class	***
Brabus Bullit	119 R	c£330,000	12/6233	720/5100	811/2100	1850kg	395	3.8	-	217	-	-	+ Seven hundred and twenty bhp - Three hundred thousand pounds	****
Cadillac CTS-V	148 R	£67,030	8/6162	556/6100	551/3800	1928kg	293	3.9	-	191	365	18.1	+ It'll stand out among M-cars and AMGs - But the novelty might wear off	****
Ford Simila RS Cosworth 4x4	141R	90-93	4/1993	220/6250	214/3500	1305 kg	159	6.6	-	144	-	24.4	+ Fast and furious - Try finding a straight one	****
Ford Signa RS Cosworth		86-90	4/1993	204/6000	204/4500	1220kg	169	6.2	-	143	-	-	+ Roadgoing Group A racecar - Don't shout about the power output!	****
Honda Accord Type R	012R	'99-'03	4/2157	209/7200	158/6700	1306kg	163	6.1	17.4		-	29.4	+ One of the finest front-drivers of all time - Lack of image	****
Infiniti Q50S Hybrid	195 D	£39,995	6/3498	359/6800	402/5000	1750kg	208	5.1		155	144	45.6	+ Good powertrain, promising chassis - Lacklustre steering, strong rivals	****
Jaguar XF 3.0 V6 Diesel S	145 D	£46.615	6/2993	271/4000	443/2000	1695kg	162	5.9	-	155	159	47.1	+ Sweet handling plus diesel economy - But we'd still have the R	****
Jaguar XF Sportbrake 3.0 V6 Diesel S	177 D	£49,015	6/2993	271/4000	443/2000	1695kg	153	6.1		155	163	46.3	+ Looks and drives better than the saloon - There's now a Sportbrake R	****
Jaguar XF 3.0 V6 Supercharged	178 D	£48,510	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1695kg	201	5.7	-	155	224	29.4	+ Fast, comfortable, refined - Bland engine, poor economy compared to diesel V6	****
Jaguar XFR	181 D	£65,440	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	284	4.8	10.2	155	270	24.4	+ Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Doesn't sound as special as it is	****
Jaguar XFR-S	187 R	£79,995	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1912kg	288	4.4	-	186	270	24.4	+ XF gets turned up to 12 - Except for the soundtrack	****
Jaguar XFR-S Sportbrake	203 R	£82,495	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1967kg	280	4.6	-	186	297	22.2	+ Looks fantastic, huge performance, nice balance - Not as sharp as the saloon	****











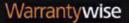












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#### Saloons / Estates / 4x4s

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft./rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	<b>evo</b> rating	
Jaguar XJ 3.0 V6 Diesel	148 D	£56,870	6/2993	271/4000	442/2000	1700kg	162	6.0		155	167	46.3	+ A great Jaguar - But not as great as the XJR	****
Jaguar XJR	191 D	£92,395	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1805kg	302	4.4	-	174	270	24.4	+ Hot-rod vibe, fine cabin - Opinion-dividing looks	****
Jaguar XJR	054 R	'03-'09	8/4196	400/6100	408/3500	1665kg	244	50	-	155	-	23.0	+ Genuine 7-series rival - 2007 facelift didn't help middle-aged image	****
Land Rover Discovery Sport	205 D	£32,395	4/2179	187/3500	310/1750	1863kg	100	9.8	-	117	159	46.3	+ Style, packaging, refinement - Will need to prove Sport tag in UK	****
Lexus IS F	151 R	707-72	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	247	4.7	10.9		270	24.4	+ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a (second hand) four-door to o	****
Lotus Carlton	170 R	91-93	6/3615	377/5200	419/4200	1658kg	231	4.8	10.6		-	17.0	+ The Millennium Falcon of saloon cars - Every drive a work-out	****
Maserati Ghibli	186 D	£52,615	6/2979	325/5000	406/1750	1810kg	182	5.6	-	163	223	29.4	+ Bursting with character; good value compared to Quattroporte - It's still a big car	****
Maserati Ghibli S	198 D	£63,760	6/2979	404/5500	406/4500	1810kg	227	5.0	-	177	242	27.2	+ Stands out from the crowd; sounds good too - Chassis lacks finesse, engine lacks reach	
Maserati Quattroporte S	184 D	£80,115	6/2979	404/5500	406/1750	1860kg	221	5.1	-	177	242	27.2	+ Tempting alternative to V8 - Feel-free steering, secondary ride lacks decorum	****
Maserati Quattroporte GTS	179 D	£108,185	8/3798 8/4691	523/6800 425/7000	479/2250	1900kg	280	4.7 <b>5.1</b>	12.1	190	274 365	23.9 18.0	+ Performance, sense of occasion - Lacks the charisma and edge of its predecessor	****
Maser i Quatt oporte S Maser i Quatt oporte Sport GTS	137 R 141 R	08-12	8/4691	423/7000	361/4750 361/4750	1990kg 1990kg	216	5.1	12.1	177	365	18.0	+ A QP with the bhp it deserves - Gree is an it Hannibal Lecter + The most stylish supersaloon - Signily wooden brakes, unforgiving ide	****
Maser i Quati oporte	085 R	08-12	8/4244	394/7000	333/4500	1930kg	207	5.1	-	171	303	17.9	+ Read s big- ar dynamics - On't use auto mode	****
Maser ti Quatt oporte Sport GTS	113 D	07-08	8/4244	396/7000	339/4250	1930kg	208	5.5	-	167	-	-	+ Best Quate oporte chass so far - More power wouldn't go amiss	****
Mercedes-Banz 190E 2.5-16	185 F	189-192	4/2498	201/6750	177/5500	1360kg	147	7.2	-	142	-	24.4	+ M-B's M3 alternative - Not as nimble as the Beemer	****
Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG	186 D	£42,270	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.6	-	155	161	31.0	+ Strong performance, classy cabin - Pricey compared to A45 AMG hatchback	***
Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG	205 R	£44,595	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.8	-	155	175	37.7	+ The most aggressive and focused sports crossover - Low on driver interaction	****
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG	151 R	'07-14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.4	9.7	160	280	23.5	+ Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - Same-era M3 is us t a little better	****
Mercedes-Benz C55 AMG	088R	'04-08	8/5439	367/5250	376/4000	1635kg	228	5.2	-	155	-	23.7	+ Furiously fast, commendably discreet - Overshadowed by M3 and RS4	****
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	187 D	£74,115	8/5461	549/5500	531/1750	1770kg	315	4.2	-	155	230	28.8	+ Power, response and accuracy in spades - A little lacking in originality	****
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG S Estate	203 R	£85,900	8/5461	577/5500	590/2000	1880kg	312	4.2	-	155	234	28.8	+ Effortless power; intuitive and approachable - Dim-witted auto 'box	****
Mercedes-Benz £63 AMG	165 R	71-73	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	1765kg	298	4.2	-	155	230	28.8	+ Turbo engine doesn't di ute £63 experience - Sometimes strugg es for traction	****
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	134 D	'09-11	8/6208	518/6800	465/5200	1765kg	298	4.5	-	155	295	22.4	+ As below, but with an extra 1 bhp and squarer hearlights - Steering still vague	***
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	096 D	'05-'09	8/6208	507/6800	465/5200	1765kg	292	4.5	10.0	155	-	19.8	+ Brilliant engine, indugent chassis - Vague steering, speed limits	****
Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG	052 R	03-06	8/5439	476/6100	516/2650	1760kg	271	4.8	10.2		- 227	21.9	+ M5-humbl nggrunt, cosseting ide - Spred mits	****
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG L Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG	191 D	£119,835	8/5461 8/5461	577/5500 536/5500	664/2250 590/2000	1995kg 2040kg	294 267	4.4	-	155 155	237	27.9 26.9	+ Monster pace - Average steering feel	****
Mercedes-Book 2505 AMG	098R	'06-13	12/5980	604/4750	737/2000	2185kg	201	4.4	-	155	334	19.8	+ Massive torque, massively reduced emissions - Massive car + God's own supersaloon - Unholyprice and thirst	****
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG S	199 D	£86,500	8/5461	577/5500	590/1750	1795kg	327	4.1	-	155	231	28.5	+ Remains quick and characterful - Dated gearbox, no four-wheel drive option in the UK	****
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	178 R	71-74	8/5461	518/5250	516/1700	1795kg	293	4.2	-	155	231	28.5	+ Monster performance, 549bhp an option - Not as desirable as a Bentley or Aston	***
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	099R	'06-11	8/6208	507/6100	464/2650	1905kg	270	4.5	-	155	345	19.5	+ Beauty, comfort, awesome performance - M5 has the edge on B-roads	***
Mercedes-Benz ML63 AMG	176 R	£86,920	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	2270kg	232	4.7	-	155	276	23.9	+ Great engine, surprisingly good dynamics - £85K buys a Boxster and an ML350	***
Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG	172 D	£124,000	8/5461	537/5500	560/2000	2475kg	220	5.4	-	130	322	-	+ It exists; epic soundtrack - Ancient chassis, silly price	***
Mitsubisni Evo X FQ-300 SST	118 R	'08-13	4/1998	290/6500	300/3500	1590kg	185	5.2	13.9	155	256	26.2	+ Evogets twin-clutch transmission - Not as exciting as it used to be	****
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-360	122D	'08-'13	4/1998	354/6500	363/3500	1560kg	231	41	-	155	328	19.9	+ Ridiculous y rapid new Evo - A five-speed gearbox?!	****
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-330 SST	134 R	'08-12	4/1998	324/6500	322/3500	1590kg	207	4.4	-	155	256	-	+ Great engine and gearoox combo - It still lives in the shadow of the Evo IX	****
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400	181R	'09-10	4/1998	403/6500	387/3500	1560kg	262	3.8	-	155	328	-	+ Most powerful factory Evo everabout X grand too much when new	****
Mitsubishi Evo IX FQ-340	088R	'05-'07	4/1997	345/6800	321/4600	1400kg	250	4.3	10.9		-	-	+ Gives Porsche drivers nightmares - Points. Lots of	****
Mitsubishi Evo IX MR FQ-360	181R	'05-'07	4/1997	366/6887	363/3200	1400kg	266	39	-	157	-	-	+ Well-executed engine upgrades - Prison food	****
Mitsubishi Evo VIII	055 R	'03-'04	4/1997	276/6500	289/3500	1410kg	199	5.1	-	157	-	-	+ The Evo grows up - Brakes need beefing up	****
Mitsubis ii Vo VII MR FQ-300	057R	'03-05	4/1997	305/6800	289/3500	1400kg	221	4.8	-	157	-	20.5	+ Extra pare, extra att tude - Extra money	****
Mitsubishi Evo VII	031R	02-'03	4/1997	276/6500	282/3500 327/5200	1360kg	206	5.0	13.0	140 150	-	20.4	+ Terrific a rounder - You tell us	****
Mitsubishi Evo VI RS Sprint Mitsubishi Evo VI Makinen Edition	041D 200R	'02-'03 '00-'01	4/1997 4/1997	320/6500 276/6500	275/2750	1260 kg 1365kg	258 205	4.4		150	-	-	+ Ruthles ly focused road weapon-For the truly committed + Our favourite Evo-Subtle it is not	****
Porsche Panamera 4S	186 D	£86,080	6/2997	414/6000	383/1750	1870kg	225	4.8		177	208	31.7	+ Strong performance and typically fine Porsche chassis - Misses characterful V8 of old 'S'	****
Porsche Panamera GTS	206 D	£93,391	8/4806	434/6700	383/3500	1925kg	229	4.4	-	178	249	26.4	+ Vivacious V8 - Standard-fit electronic damping neuters the driving experience	****
Porsche Panamera Turbo	137 R	£108,006	8/4806	493/6000	516/2250	1970kg	254	3.6	8.9	188	270	24.6	+ Fast, refined and dynamically sound - It still leaves us cold	***
Porsche Panamera Turbo S	159 D	71-73	8/4806	542/6000	590/2250	1995kg	276	3.7	-	190	270	24.6	+ Pace, excellent ergonomics - Steering feel, ilde	****
Porsche Macan S	205 R	£43,648	6/2997	335/5500	339/1450	1865kg	183	5.4	-	157	204	31.4	+ No less compelling than the Turbo - Although lacks its ultimate speed and agility	****
Porsche Macan Turbo	194 R	£59,648	6/3604	394/6000	406/1350	1925kg	208	4.8	-	165	208	30.7	+ Doesn't feel like an SUV - Still looks like one	****
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2)	173 D	£72,523	8/4806	414/6500	380/3500	2085kg	202	5.6	-	162	251	26.4	+ Dynamically the best SUV on sale - At two tons, it's still no sports car	****
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk2)	202 D	£92,628	8/4806	513/6000	533/2250	2185kg	239	4.5	-	173	261	25.2	+ Remarkable performance, handling, completeness - Bigger, heavier, pricier than Macan	****
Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (Mk2)	184 D	£107,784	8/4806	542/6000	553/2250	2215kg	249	4.5	-	175	270	24.6	+ Near-identical power and torque to a Zonda C12S - In an SUV	****
Range Rover Evoque Coupe Si4	160 D	£46,660	4/1999	237/6000	251/1900	1670kg	144	7.0	-	135	199	-	+ Striking looks, sporting dynamics - Hefty price, and petrol version is auto-only	****
Range Rover Sport V8 Supercharged	186 D	£93,450	8/4999	503/6000	460/2500	2335kg	219	5.0	-	155	298	22.1	+ Deceptively quick and capable sports SUV - It's still got a weight problem	****
Range Rover SDV8	180 D	£80,850	8/4367	334/3500	516/1750	2360kg	144	6.5	-	140	229	32.5	+ Lighter, more capable, even more luxurious - Diesel V6 model feels more alert	***
Rolls-Royce Ghost	186 D	£216,864	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2360kg	242	4.7	-	155	317	20.8	+ It's quicker than you think - It's more enjoyable driven slowly	****
Rolls-Royce Phantom	054 R	£310,200	12/6749	453/5350	531/3500	2560kg	180	5.7	-	149	377	18.0	+ Rolls reinvented for the 21st Century - The roads are barely big enough	****
Subaru WRX STI	201 R	£28,995	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1534kg	196	5.2	-	159	242	27.2	+ Fast Subaru saloon returns (again) - Without a power increase	****
Subaru WRX STI	151 D	70-73	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1505kg	200	51	-	158	243	26.9	+ Fast Sub-u sa on returns - Without the blue paint and sold wheels	****
Subaru Impreza WRX GB 70 Subaru Impreza STI	109 D 090 R	07	4/2457 4/2457	266/5700 276/6000	289/4000	1410kg 1495kg	192 188	52 53	-	143 158	-	25.9	+ fitting final filing for classic' impreza - End of an era + Stunning to drive - Not so stunning to look at	****
Subaru Impreza STI Spec C*	084 D	'05-07	4/1994	320/6730	311/3500	1350kg	240	4.3		157	-	23.9	+ Light -, fast -, Tercer - The need or self-estraint	****
Subaru Impreza RB 10	105 R	107	4/2457	316/6000	332/3750	1495kg	215	4.8	-	155		-	+ Fitting tribule to a railying legend - To o hardcore for some?	****
Subaru Impreza WFX STIPPP	073R	'03-'05	4/1994	300/6000	299/4000	1470kg	207	5.2	12.9				+ A Subaru with real edge - b too edgy in the wet	****
Sub-uSTi Type RA Spec C*	067R	03-05	4/1994	335/7000	280/3750	1380kg	247	4.3	11.1	160	-	-	+ Best Impre a since the P1-Lost is through the our voice	****
Subaru Impreza Turbo	011 R	98-00	4/1994	215/5600	214/4000	1235kg	177	5.4	14.6		-	27.2	+ Destined for classic status - Thirsty	****
Suparu Impreza P1	200 R	'00-'01	4/1994	276/6500	260/4000	1203kg	219	4.9	13.3		-	25.0	+ Ultimate old-shape Imprera - Prices reflect this	****
Subaru Impreza RB5 (PPP)	187R	99	4/1994	237/6000	258/3500	1235kg	195	5.0	14.1	143	-	-	+ Perfect blend of poise and power - Umited numbers	****
Subaru Impreza 22B	188 R	98-99	4/2212	276/6000	265/3200	1270kg	220	5.0	13.1	150	-	-	+ The ultimate Impreza - Doesn't come cheap	****
Tesla Model S Performance	196 R	£74,135	310kW	416	442/0	2100kg	201	4.2	-	130	0	n/a	+ Intoxicating performance, soothing refinement - Generic styling, charging limitations	****
Vauxhall Insignia VXR SuperSport	189 D	£29,824	6/2792	321/5250	321/5250	1825kg	179	5.6	-	170	249	26.6	+ A 170mph Vauxhall - Should be a more engaging steer	****
Vauxhall Vectra VXR	102D	'06-'09	6/2792	276/5500	262/1800	1580kg	177	6.1	-	161	-	27.4	+ Great engine, effortless pace, good value - Numb steering, lumpy ride	****
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS	187 D	£54,499	8/6162	576/6150	545/3850	1834kg	311	4.2	-	155	363	18.5	+ Brawn, pace, character - Frustrating chassis settings; it's nearly C63 money	****
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS	160 R	71-73	8/6162	425/6000	406/4600	1831kg	236	49	-	155	320	20.9	+ Oversteery and characterful. Available as a pick-up too! - Nearly M3 saloon money	****
Vauxhall VXR8 Bathurst S	148R	09	8/6162	564/6000	527/4000	1866kg	307	4.6	10.7		-	-	+ A tauter VXRB. Bonkers pace, brilliant noise - Gearchange still rubbish	****
Volvo V60 Polestar	197 D	£49,775	6/2953	345/5250	369/3000	1759kg	199	5.0	-	155	237	27.7	+ First Volvo to get a full Polestar makeover - Still a close relative of the standard V60	***

# POCKET buying guide

Audi S3 (Mk2)

Years 2007-2012
Engine In-line 4-cyt, 1984cc, turbo
Power 261btp @ 6000rpm
Torque 258lb tt @ 2500-5000rpm
0-60mph 5.6sec Top speed 155mph



#### WHY WOULD YOU?

The second-gen S3 pairs subtle good looks with mighty grip and practicality, and with 261bhp it's got enough firepower to live with all but the very fastest new hatches. Put simply, it's a very desirable giant-slayer.

#### WHAT TO PAY

High-mileage S3s start at £10k; £3k more gets average miles and a FSH. Late cars start at £20k.

#### WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

A rattling manual 'box during deceleration could signal an impending rebuild. Clutches are durable, but if the car has been remapped you'll need an uprated one. The optional DSG gearbox requires an oil change every 40k miles at the latest. Suspension and brakes are generally robust. The rear wiper motor is prone to failure, so check that and all other electrics. (Full guide, **evo** 201.)

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#### **Our Choice**

**Audi R8 Spyder.** The Spyder boasts supercar looks, presence and performance, yet you really could drive one every day. The V8 has a sweet engine and great dynamics, but if money's no object, we'd be seriously tempted by the equally brilliant V10.



#### Best of the Rest

The Mk3 Porsche Boxster S is a brilliant all-rounder, while the Lotus Exige S Roadster counters with a more focused driving experience. Jaguar's F-type also impresses in both S (left) and V8 S forms. Mazda's MX-5 is best for budget rear-drive fun, but for the ultimate thrills, get a Caterham 620R or Ariel Atom.

#### Sports Cars / Convertibles

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Maxmph	C02 g/km	EC mpg	<b>eVO</b> rating	
Alfa Romeo 8C Spider	161 R	'09-'11	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1675kg	273	4.5		181		_	+ Beauty meets beast. They hit it off - Boot is useless for touring	****
Ariel Atom 3.5 Supercharged	180 D	£38.000	4/1998	310/8400	169/7200	550kg	573	2.7	-	155		-	+ As mad as ever - Rain	****
Ariel Atom 3.5R	198 R	£64,800	4/1998	350/8400	243/6100	550kg	647	2.6		155	-	-	+ Remarkable balance, poise and pace - Pricey	****
Ariel Atom Mugen	165 R	£55,000	4/1998	270/8300	188/6000	550kg	499	2.9		150	-	-	+ Perfect engine for the Atom's chassis - Only ten being made	****
Ariel Atom V8 500	165 R	£146,699	8/3000	475/10,500	284/7750	550kg	877	3.0	5.8	170	-	-	+ An experience unlike anything else on Planet Car - £150K for an Atom	****
Arlel Atom 3 245	113 D	'08-72	4/1998	245/8200	155/5200	500kg	498	3.2	-	150	-	33.0	+ The Atom Use got a little bit better - Can still be a bit draughty	****
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	138 R	'09-12	4/1998	300/8200	162/7200	550kg	554	33	-	155	-	-	+ It's brilliant - It's mental	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	130 R	£89,994	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	250	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	+ Sportiest, coolest drop-top Aston in years - Starting to feel its age	***
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S Roadster	161 R	£108,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1690kg	258	4.6	-	189	299	21.9	+ Sounds amazing, looks even better - Still not the best drop-top in its class	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster	202 D	£147.000	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1745kg	329	4.1	-	201	343	-	+ A brilliant two-seat roadsterlet down by a frustrating gearbox	***
Aston Martin V12 Vantage Roadster	175 R	12-14	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1760kg	294	44	-	190	-	-	+ As good as the coupe, with amplified V/2 rumble - Just a smidten shakier	***
Aston Martin DB9 Volante	150 D	£141,995	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1815kg	263	4.6	-	190	368	18.2	+ Consummate cruiser and capable when pushed - Roof-up wind noise	***
Aston Martin DBS Volante	133 D	'09-12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1810kg	286	4.3	-	191	388	17.3	+ A feelgood car par excellence - It's a bit of a heavyweight	***
Audi TTS Roadster	122 D	'08-'14	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1455kg	187	56	-	155	189	34.9	+ Effort lessly quick - Long-term appeal open to quest on	***
Audi TT RS Roadster	133 D	'09-14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1510kg	225	4.7		155	212	31.0	+Terrific engine Is the best thing about it	***
Audi TT Roadster (Mkl 225php)	016 R	'00-'06	4/1781	225/5900	206/2200	1395kg	164	6.9	20.0	150	-	30,4	+ Winner on the King's Road - Tralls Boxster on the open road	***
Audi S5 Cabriolet	130 D	£46,770	6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1875kg	178	5.6	-	155	199	33.2	+ Gets the S4's trick supercharged engine - Bordering on dull	***
Audi RS5 Cabriolet	179 D	£69,505	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1920kg	235	4.9	-	155	249	26.4	+ Pace, looks, interior, naturally aspirated V8 - Not the last word in fun or involvement	***
Audi RS4 Cabriolet	094D	'06-'08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1845kg	228	4.9	-	155	-	-	+ That engine - Wind e wobble, wind e wobble, e ly on a plate	***
Audi R8 V8 Spyder	186 D	£102,385	8/4163	424/7900	317/6000	1660kg	259	4.8	-	187	337	19.6	+ More delicate and subtle than the V10 - The V10 sounds even better	****
Audi R8 V10 Spyder	185 R	£123,485	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1720kg	306	4.1	-	194	349	19.0	+ Sensational for the money - Not quite a rival for the 458 and 12C Spiders	****
BAC Mono	189 R	£114,045	4/2261	280/7700	206/6000	540kg	527	2.8		170	-	-	+ The most single-minded track car available - That means no passengers	***
Bentley Continental GT V8 Convertible	168 R	£150,200	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2395kg	212	4.7	-	187	254	25.9	+ One of the world's best topless GTs - Still no sports car	****
Bentley Continental GT V8 S Convertible		£160,500	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2395kg	221	4.5		191	258	25.4	+ A true drivers' Bentley - Excessively heavy; feels like it could give more	****
Bentley Conti GT Speed Convertible	187 D	£181,000	12/5998	626/6000	605/1700	2420kg	263	4.1	-	203	347	19.0	+ Effortless performance, style - Running costs a tad on the high side	****
Bentiey Continental Supersports	147D	10-12	12/5998	621/6000	590/2000	2395kg	263	39	-	202	388	17.3	+ Fast, capable and refined - Coupe does the Supersports thing better	***
Bentiey Continental GTC Speed	131 D	'09-71	12/5998	600/6000	590/1750	2485kg	245	4.5	-	200	396	17.0	+ A great convertible just not better - Optional carbon brakes a necessity	****
BMW Z4 sDrive 35i M Sport (Mk2)	186 D	£43,005	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1505kg	204	5.2	-	155	219	30.1	+ Looks, hard-top versatility, drivetrain - Clumsy chassis is upset by ragged surfaces	***
BMW Z4 3.0si (Mk1)	094D	'06-'09	6/2996	265/6600	232/2750	1310kg	205	5.7	-	155	-	32.9	+ Terrific straight-six - Handing not as play ul as we'd like	****
BMW Z4 M Roadster	091R	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1410kg	244	4.8	-	155	-	23.3	+ Exhilarating and characterful, that engine - Stiff suspension	****
BMW M Roadster	002R	98-02	6/3246	325/7400	258/4900	1375 g	240	53	-	155	-	25.4	+ Fresh - Ir M3, that motor, hunky looks - M Coupe drives better	***
BMW 435i Convertible	194 D	£44.980	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1740kg	176	5.6	-	155	190	34.8	+ Impressive chassis, smart looks, neat roof - Extra weight, not as composed as coupe	****
BMW M4 Convertible (F83)	202 D	£60.745	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1750kg	247	4.6	-	155	213	31.0	+ As good as fast four-seat drop-tops getbut still not as good as a coupe or saloon	****
BMW M3 Convertible (E3)	119 D	'08-13	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1810kg	232	5.3	-	155	297	22.2	+ M DCT transmission, page, slick roof - Extra weight blunts the edge	***
BMW M3 Convertible (E46)	035 D	00-15	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1655kg	207	53	-	155	2.51	23.3	+ That engine - Gets the wobbles on Bittish B-roads	****
BMW M6 Convertible	098D	'06-10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1930kg	264	4.8	-	155	352	19.2	+ Composure, grap, power, comfort - Steering acks feel at low speed	****
BMW Z8	026 R	'00-103	8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	256	4.8	11.1	155	- 552	14.4	+ M5-power district superstant - Steering and Steering an	***
Caterham Seven 160	198 R	£18.330	4/660	80/7000	79/3400	490kg	166	6.5	11.1	100	-	14.4	+ The fabulous Seven formula at its most basic - Gets pricey with options	****
Caterham Seven Roadsport 125	105 R	£23,330	4/1595	125/6100	120/5350	539kg	235	5.9		112		-	+ New Ford-engined model is just great - Bigger drivers need SV model	****
Caterham Seven Supersport	165 R	£24,830	4/1595	140/6900	120/5330	520kg	273	4.9	-	120	-		+ One of the best Caterhams is less than £20Kif you build it yourself	****
Caterham Seven Supersport R	180 D	£24,630 £28.330	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	535kg	342	4.9	-	130	-	-	+ The best road-and-track Seven yet - Impractical, noisy, uncomfortable	****
Caterham Seven Superlight R400	105 R	£36,330	4/1999	210/7800	152/5750	525kg	406	3.8	-	140		-	+ R400 reborn with (lots of) Ford power - Slightly hesitant low-rev pick-up	****
Caterham Seven Superlight R500	123 R	£43,055	4/1999	263/8500	177/7200	506kg	528	2.9	-	150	-	-	+ Better power-to-weight ratio than a Veyron - Until you add the driver	****
	094 R	£45,330	4/1999	256/7500			460	3.8	-	155	-	-		
Caterham Seven CSR 260 Superlight Caterham Seven 620R	187 R	£50,555	4/1999	311/7700	200/6200 219/7350	565kg 545kg	580	2.8	-	155	-	-	+ Brilliant for high days, holidays and trackdays - Wet Wednesdays + Banzai on track, yet still relevant on the road - £50k for a Seven?	****
	150 R	'09-12	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	515kg	345	4.5	-	140	-		+ Poss ly I i e Caterham vu need - They rent the p	
Caterham Seven Superlight R300 Caterham Levante	131 R	'09-12	8/2398	550/10000	300/8500		1074	4.8	8.2	150	-	-		****
Caterham Seven 8300	068 R	02-10	4/1796	160/7000	130/5000	520kg	325	4.8	8.2	130		-	+ Twice the power to weight ratio of a Veyron! - Not easy to drive slowly	****
						500kg			-		-	-	+ Our 2002 Trackday Car of the Year - Not for wimps	****
Caterham Seven R400	068R	'03-'06	4/1796	200/7500	150/5750	490kg	415	39		140	-	-	+ Race car with a number plate - Your missus will leave you	****
Caterham Seven R500	200R	'99-06	4/1796	230/8600	155/7200	460kg	510	3.6	8.8	146			+ The K-series Seven at its very best-No cup holders	****
Caterham Seven R500 Evolution	069R	'04	4/1998	250/8000	190/4000	460kg	552	3.9	8.1	150	-	-	+ Madder than Mad Jack McMad- Er, it's a bit mad	****
Donkervoort D8 GTO Performance	185 R	£120,000	5/2480	375/5500	350/1750	695kg	548	2.8	-	168	-	-	+ There's nothing else like it - Pricey for a car with a five-cylinder engine	****
Ferrari California T	198 D	£154,490	8/3855	552/7500	557/4750	1729kg	324	3.6	-	196	250	26.9	+ Turbocharged engine is a triumph - Still places daily useability above outright thrills	****
Ferrari California	171 D	'08-'14	8/4297	483/7750	372/5000	1705kg	290	3.8	-	193	299	-	+ Revised with sharper performance and dynamics - We'd still take a 458 Spider	****
Honda S2000	118 D	'99-'09	4/1997	237/8300	153/7500	1260kg	191	6.2	-	150	-	28.2	+ An alternative and rev-happy roadster - The Boxster's better	***
Jaguar F-type Convertible	186 R	£58,535	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1597kg	213	5.3	-	161	205	32.1	+ Beautiful, enjoyable, responsive - Noticeably junior to the V6 S	****
Jaguar F-type S Convertible	183 R	£67,535	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1614kg	236	4.9	-	171	209	32.1	+ Better-damped and more rounded than the V8 S - A Boxster S is £20k cheaper	****
Jaguar F-type V8 S Convertible	183 R	£79,995	8/5000	488/6500	461/2500	1665kg	298	4.3	-	186	259	25.5	+ Wilder than the V6 S - Could be too exuberant for some	****
Jaguar XK 5.0 Convertible		£60,975	8/5000	380/6500	380/3500	1621kg	238	5.3	-	155	264	25.2	+ Basic XK gets extra powerbut loses some of its GT refinement	****
Jaguar XKR Convertible	130 R	£75,975	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1725kg	296	4.6	-	155	292	23.0	+ Gains Jag's fantastic new V8 - Loses sporting ground to its main foes	****
Jaguar XKR-S Convertible	167 R	£104,490	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1725kg	319	4.2	-	186	292	23.0	+ Loud and mad; most exciting Jag in years - It's also the most expensive in years	****
Jaguar XK	089 R	'06-'09	8/4196	294/6000	30 4100	1635kg	183	6.6	-	155	-	25.0	+ Every bit as good as the XK coupe - 294bhp still only just enough	****
Jaguar XKR		'06-'09	8/4196	414/6250	413/4000	1705kg	247	50	-	155	-	-	+ Arst Jag sports car for years - Overwrought detailing	****
Jaguar XKR	004 R	97-06	8/3996	370/6150	387/3600	1750kg	215	5.4	12.8	155	-	15.6	+ Hurricane-in-the-hair motoring - A danger to toupees everywhere	****
KTM X-Bow GT	183 D	£95,880	4/1984	281/6400	310/3200	875kg	326	4.1	-	144	189	34.0	+ Extraordinary ability, now in a more road-friendly package - Price	****
KTM X-Bow R	165 R	£87,480	4/1984	296/5500	295/3300	818kg	368	3.6	-	144	-	-	+ Sharper handling, more power - Pity it's not even lighter, and cheaper	****
KTM X-Bow	138 R	'08-72	4/1984	237/5500	229/2000	818kg	294	3.8	-	137	-	-	+ Mad looks; real quality feel - Heavier and pricier than you'd hope	****

#### PAST master

#### Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34) Issue 009, July 1999

Sixteen years ago, evo's John Barker was the first journalist to drive the new R34 Skyline on UK roads The declared output is 276bhp, but the R34 has 320 – nearer 350 with the Nismo pipe. Press the throttle hard and the straight-six picks up keenly, even from low revs. It gives a bigger, crisper shove than the R33, one that is noticeably smoother and sustained right up to 7500rpm.

'At any speed, the nose of the R34 feels simply nailed to

the tarmac. It gives the impression there's no corner it can't just dive into, apex-perfect. In faster turns a sharp steering input will get the tail drifting, but traction and torque are pretty well matched, so you can't hang it out on a bootful of gas. The R34 could certainly handle a power hike, but I don't have an unfulfilled hankering for more.'







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#### Ratings

#### Sports Cars / Convertibles

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	<b>evo</b> rating	
Lotus Elise 1.6	144 D	£30,900	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	876kg	155	6.0	_	127	149	45.0	+ New 1.6 Elise is light and fantastic - Smaller engine could put some off	****
Lotus Elise 1.6 Club Racer	183 R	£30,900	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	852kg	160	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	+ Even lighter, even more focused - A touch pricey for a stripped-out Elise	****
Lotus Elise S	172 R	£37,200	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	924kg	239	4.2	-	145	175	37.5	+ New supercharged Elise boasts epic grip and pace -£37K before (pricey) options	****
Lotus Elise S Club Racer	189 D	£37,200	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	905kg	244	4.2	-	145	175	37.5	+ Purist approach intensifies ability - Lightest, option-free spec requires commitment	****
Lotus Exige S Roadster	186 R	£55,500	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1166kg	301	4.0	-	145	236	28.0	+ Like the hard-top Exige S, but more road-friendly - Boxster S is a better all-rounder	****
Lotus Elise R	068R	'04-71	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	860kg	223	5.6	13.9	150	196	34.4	+ Most thrillsome Elise yet - Blaring engine note	****
Lotus Elise SC	131 R	'08-71	4/1794	218/8000	156/5000	870kg	254	4.5	11.4	148	199	33.2	+ All the usual Elise mag c - Superchaged engine lacks sparkle	***
Lotus Elise S18	104R	'06-70	4/1794	134/6200	127/4200	860kg	158	6.3	18.7	127	-	37.2	+ Brilliant entry-level Elise - Precious Ittle	****
Lotus Elise 111S	049R	'02-'04	4/1796	156/7000	129/4650	860kg	197	51	-	131		40.9	+ A genuine y useable Elise - Air-con? In an Elise?	****
Lotus Elise Sport 135	040D	703	4/1796	135/6200	129/4850	726kg	189	5.4	-	129	-	- (76)(0)	+ One of our fave S2 Elses - Brakes need more bite and pedal feel	****
Lotus Elise Sport 190	044R	103	4/1796	190/7800	128/5000	710kg	272	4.7	12.1	135	-	-	+ Fabulous trackday tool - Pricey	****
Lotus Elise (S1)	126 R	96-00	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	164	6.1	18.5	126	-	39.4	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical?	****
Lotus 2-Eleven Supercharged	123R	'07-'11	4/1796	252/8000	179/7000	670kg	382	3.8	-	150	-	-	+ Impressive on road and track - Not hardcore enough for some	****
Lotus 2-Eleven GT4	138 R	'09-71	4/1796	266/8200	179/7200	670kg	403	3.7	-	155	-	-	+ evo Track Car of the Year 2009 - It's a 76-grand Lotus with no roof	****
Lotus 2-Eleven	126 R	07-71	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	720kg	267	4.3	-	140	-	-	+ Not far off supercharged car's pace - Pricey once it's made road-legal	****
Lotus 340R	126 R	00	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	658kg	293	4.5	12.5	126	-	-	+ Hardcore road - acer that looks like a dune buggy from Mars	****
Lotus Elan SE	095R	89-95	4/1588	165/6600	148/4200	1022kg	164	6.7	-	137	-	21.0	+ Awesome front-drive chassis - Rather uninvolving	****
Maserati GranCabrio	142 D	£98,340	8/4691	434/7000	332/4750	1980kg	223	5.2	-	177	337	19.5	+ As good to drive as it is to look at - Lacks the grunt of some rivals	****
Maserati GranCabrio Sport	161 D	£103,935	8/4691	444/7000	376/4750	1980kg	228	5.0	-	177	377	19.5	+ Looks, performance, cruising ability - Brakes could be sharper	****
Maserati GranCabrio MC	185 D	£111,770	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1973kg	234	4.9	-	179	337	19.5	+ Most powerful GranCabrio yet - The GranCabrio is starting to show its age	****
Mazda MX-5 1.8i SE (Mk3.5)		£18,495	4/1798	124/6500	123/4500	1075kg	117	9,9	-	121	167	39.8	+ Basic MX-5 offers plenty of fun - But you'll probably want the 2.0's power	****
Mazda MX-5 R'ster Coupe 2.0i (Mk3.5)	170 R	£23,095	4/1999	158/7000	139/5000	1173kg	137	7.9	-	136	181	36.2	+ Handles brilliantly again - Less than macho image; no soft-top option with 2-litre engine	
Mazda MX-5 1 8i (Mk3)	091R	'05-'09	4/1798	124/6500	123/4500	1155kg	108	9.3	-	122	-	-	+ Gearchange, interior - Lost some of the charm of old MX-5s; dubious handing	****
Mazda MX-518i (Mx2)	017R	'98-'05	4/1839	146/7000	124/5000	1065kg	140	8.6	-	123		32.5	+ Affordable ragtops don't get much better - Cheap cabin	****
Mazda MX-5 1 6 (Mk1)	131 R	89-97	4/1597	115/6500	100/5500	97 kg	120	9.0	-	114		-	+ The original and still (pretty much) the best - Less than rigid	****
Mercedes-Benz SLK350 Sport	161 R	£44,605	6/3498	302/6500	273/3500	1465kg	209	5.5	-	155	167	39.8	+ Best non-AMG SLK yet - Still no Boxster-beater	****
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG	186 R	£55,345	8/5461	416/6800	398/4500	1615kg	262	4.6	-	155	195	33.6	+ Quicker and more economical than ever - Needs to be sharper, too	***
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG	087R	'05-'10	8/5439	355/5750	375/4000	1575kg	229	49	-	155	-	23.5	+ Superb engine, responsive chassis - No manual option, ESP spoils fun	****
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG Black Series	110 R	'07-'08	8/5439	394/5750	383/3750	1495kg	268	4,9	11.2	174	-	-	+ AMG cets serious - Dull-writed 7G-Tronic auto box, uneven dynamics	****
Mercedes-Benz SL500	169 D	£81,915	8/4663	429/5250	516/1800	1710kg	255	4.6	-	155	212	31.0	+ Wafty performance, beautifully engineered - Lacks ultimate sports car feel	****
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	171 D	£112,510	8/5461	530/5500	590/2000	1770kg	304	4.3	-	155	231	-	+ Monster performance, lighter than before - Still heavy, steering lacks consistency	****
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	183 D	£170,815	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	1875kg	336	4.0	-	155	270	24.4	+ Chassis just about deals with the power - Speed limits	****
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	117 D	'08-13	8/6208	518/6800	464/5200	1970kg	278	4.6	-	155	328	20.0	+ More focused than old SL55 AMG - Lost some of its all-round appeal	****
Mercedes-Benz SL55 AMG	070 R	702-'07	8/5439	493/6100	516/2650	1955kg	256	4.6	10.2	155	-	-	+ As fast as a Murcielago - Not as much fun	****
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	071D	'04-70	12/5980	604/4800	737/2000	2035kg	302	4.1	-	155		-	+ Gob-smacking performance - Gob-smackingly pricey	****
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Roadster	167 R	£176,985	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1660kg	345	3.7	-	197	308	21.4	+ Loses none of the coupe's talents - But (understandably) loses the gullwing doors	****
Mini JCW Convertible (R57)	130 R	£24,950	4/1598	208/6000	206/1850	1230kg	172	6.9	-	146	169	38.7	+ A manlier Mini cabrio. As hardcore as the hatchwhich is still better	****
Morgan 3 Wheeler	198 R	£25,950	2/1976	82/5250	103/3250	525kg	159	6.0	-	115	215	30.3	+ Quirky, characterful, brilliant - Can become a two-wheeler if you push too hard	****
Morgan Plus 8 Speedster	202 R	£69,995	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1000kg	368	4.2	-	148	282	23.3	+ Fantastic old-school roadster experience - Gets unsettled by big bumps	****
Morgan Plus 8	171 R	£86,345	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1100kg	334	4.4	-	155	256	25.7	+ Hilarious mix of old looks and new mechanicals - Refinement is definitely old-school	****
Morgan Aero SuperSports	145 R	£128,045	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.2	-	170	-	-	+ As above, with a V8 and targa top - It's proper supercar money	****
Morgan Aero 8	105 R	'02-'08	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400	1100kg	334	4.5	-	170	-	25.2	+ Glorious sound, Vew over bonnet, dynamics - Awkward-boking rear	****
Nisan 370Z Roadster	143R	70-74	6/3696	326/7000	269/5200	1554kg	213	5.5		155	262	25.2	+ The Ze 's old-school character remains into t - 1's purpose 'ul looks don't	****
Porsche Boxster (981)	172 R	£38.810	6/2706	261/6700	206/4500	1310kg	202	5.4	-	164	192	34.5	+ Goes & looks better; cleanest Boxster ever - Steering now electric to help cut CO2	****
Porsche Boxster S (981)	186 R	£47,035	6/3436	311/6700	265/4500	1320kg	239	5.1	-	173	206	32.1	+ Boxster steps out of 911's shadow - But gets 911's less appealing electric steering	****
Porsche Boxster GTS (981)	203 D	£52,879	6/3436	325/6700	273/4500	1345kg	246	5.0	-	174	211	31.4	+ Superb dynamics, fantastic engine, great loooks - Sport suspension is very firm	****
Por sche Boxster (987)	2030	'05-12	6/2893	252/6400	214/4400	1335kg	192	5.0	-	163	221	30.0	+ Second-gen Boxster's as brilliant as ever - It's a typically Porsche redesign	****
Po sche Boxs er S (987)	161R	'05-12	6/3436	306/6400	265/5500	1355kg	229	53	-	170	223	29.7	+ As above, but with more power - Lighter steering than before	****
Posse e Boxs er Spyder (911)	198R	70-12	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1275kg	252	5.0	-	166	221	29.1	+ Light -, more give -cent ic Boxster - Collapsed-by yroof out the most practical	****
Po se e Boxs er (9%)	049R	'99-'04	6/2687	228/6300	192/4700	1275kg	182	6.3	-	155	661	29.1	+ Sill an impeccable sports ar - Very title	****
Po sche Boxs et S (956)	070 R	'99-'04	6/3179	260/6200	228/4700	1320kg	200	5.5	-	164	_	26.9	+ Added power is seductive - As above	****
Porsche 911 Carrera Cabriolet (991)	183 R	£82.072	6/3436	345/7400	288/5600	1450kg	242	5.0	-	178	217	30.7	+ Brilliant engine - Doesn't quite have the 'magic at any speed' character of previous 911s	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S Cabriolet (991)	171 R	£92,108	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1465kg	273	4.6		187	229	29.1	+ All-new open 911 drives just like the coupe - Which means the same artificial steering	****
Por sche 11 Turno Cabrio et (997)	139 D	07-12	6/3800	493/6000	479/1950	1645kg	305	3.8	-	194	275	24.1	+ Absurdy guick and capable drop-top-twe'd still take the coupe	****
Possible 1 Turbo Cabrio et (9%)	060 R	03-05	6/3596	414/6000	413/4600	1700kg	250	4.7		185	213	24.1	+ Faster than you'll ever need it to be - Just the imake the coupe	****
Radical SR3 SL	174 R	£81,300	4/2000	300/6000	265/4000	795kg	383	3.0	-	161	-	-	+ Our 2011 Track Car of the Year, and it's road-legal - You'll need to wrap up warm	****
Radical SR8LM	138 R	0-12	8/2800	460/10.500	260/8000	680kg	687	3.0	-	168	-	-	+ Fastest ar around the Nordschiefe - Convincing people it's road legal	****
Renault Sport Spider	193 R	96-99	4/1998	148/6000	136/4500	930kg	157	6.5		131	Ė		+ Rally, fabulous unassisted steering leel - Heavier than you dihope	****
Tesia Roadster	131 R	'08-12	4/1998 185kW	248/4500	273/0	1283kg	196	5.0	14.3	120	0	n/a		****
	187 R	00-06	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	7.2	21.2	130	-	38.2	+ If misist refutur, it spong to be fun-turn ed range, high once	****
Toyota MR2	070 R	01-07		350/7200	290/5500	1050kg	338		21.2	160	-	30.2	+ Ticht lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggille spille + Weil-soried sofill op TVR - Awkwild stylling	
TVR Tamora TVR Tuscan Convertible	091R	'05-'07	6/3605 6/3996	350/7200	315/6000	1050kg	337	4.5 3.8	6.1	195+	-	-		****
									<i>B.1</i>		-	26 /	+ Spirit of the Griffreborn - Over 195mph? Really?	
TVR Chimae a 5 0	007R	93-103	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.6		167	-	26.4	+ Gorge us noise, tarma ppl g grunt - Details	****
TVR Griffith 4.3	068R	92-'93	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1060kg	268	4.8	11.2	148	-		+ The ar that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details	****
TVR Griffith 500	009R	93-01	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.8	11.2	7.00	-	22.1	+ Gruff diamond - A few rough edges	****
Vauxhall VX220	023R	'00-04	4/2198	145/5800	150/4000	875kg	168	5.6	-	136	-	34.4	+ Absurdy good Vauxh II - The badge?	****
Vauxha I VX220 Turoo	066 R	'03-05	4/1998	197/5500	184/1950	930kg	215	4.7	-	151	-	-	+ Nothing comes close for the money - Marginal everyday usability	****



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★ Thrill-free zone ★★ Tepid ★★★ Interesting ★★★★ Seriously good ★★★★★ A truly great car



Our Choice Porsche 911 GT3. You might think the GT3's win at evo Car of the Year 2013 was a foregone conclusion, but neither of the last two GT3s (the 997.2 and 997.1) claimed an eCoty title. Yet the 991 managed it, and in a vintage year too (Ferrari F12, Merc SLS Black). Yes, it really is that good.



**Best of the Rest**Aston's V12 Vantage S (left) is a deeply well-sorted drivers' car. The Cayman S is a truly brilliant all-rounder, while Jaguar's F-type R Coupe is the best F-type yet, and finished second in Car of the Year 2014. Mercedes' new AMG GT is also a great drive - enough to trouble the 911 and Audi R8.

#### Coupes / GTs

	Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Мах трh	CO2g/km	EC mpg	<b>evo</b> rating	
	Alfa Romeo 4C	190 R	£45,000	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	895kg	269	4.5		160	157	41.5	+ Carbonfibre tub, mini-supercar looks - Hot hatch engine, clunky gearbox	****
	Alfa Romeo 8C Competizione	120 R	07-09	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1585kg	268	4.1	-	181	-	-	+ Looks, exclusivity, noise, balance - They re all sold	****
0	Alpina D4 Biturbo	206 R	£50,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	+ Fifth-gear oversteer - Sounds like a diesel; fuel economy not as good as you might hop	e ****
Ð	Alpina B4 Biturbo	206 R	£58,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1615kg	254	4.2	-	188	177	37.2	+ More fluid than the M4; better traction, too - Not as precise as the M-car over the limit	****
	Alpina B3 Biturbo (E92)	108 R	07-13	6/2979	355/5500	369/3800	1570kg	230	4.8	-	177		29.1	+ Alpina's M3 alternative - Too refined for some	****
	Alpina B3 GT3 (E92)	176 D	72-73	6/2979	402/6000	398/4500	1535kg	266	4.4	-	186	224	-	+ Alpha's M3 GTS alternative - Auto gearDox flustrations when pressing on	****
	Aston Martin V8 Vantage	169 D	£84,995	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1630kg	262	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	+ 2012 upgrades keep the V8 Vantage on song - Starting to feel a little dated, though	****
	Aston Martin V8 Vantage S	168 R	£99,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	299	21.9	+ Keener engine, V12 Vantage looks - Slightly sluggish auto only	****
	Aston Martin V12 Vantage S	190 R	£138,000	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1665kg	345	3.7		205	200	** 2	+ The best car Aston Martin currently makes - Old-school automated 'box	****
	Aston Martin V 2 Vantage Aston Martin V 2 Zagato	146R 191F	'09-13 '13	12/5935 12/5935	510/6500 510/6500	420/5750 420/5750	1680kg 1680kg	308 308	4.4	9.7	190	388 388	17.3 17.3	+ The car we noted the V8 Vantage would be - Erm, a tad thirsty? + The looks, the noise, the way it drives - It's several times the price of a V2 Vantage	****
	Aston Martin DB9	178 R	£131,995	12/5935	510/6500	457/5500	1785kg	290	4.6	-	183	368	18.2	+ Better than the old DB9 in every respect - Automatic gearbox could be quicker	****
	Aston Martin DBS	142R	107-12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1695kg	306	4.2	-	191	388	17.3	+ Stupendous engine, gearous, brakes - Pricey. Can bite the unwary	****
	Aston Martin DB7 Vantage	010 R	00-05	12/5935	420/6000	400/5000	1770kg	241	4.9	11.2	165	-	18.6	+ DB7 with near-supercar pace - Handling lacks edge	****
	Audi TT 2.0 TFSI (Mk3)	204 R	£32,410	4/1984	227/4500	273/1650	1230kg	188	6.0	-	155	137	47.9	+ Desirable, grippy and effortlessly quick - Still not the last word in interaction	****
	Audi TT 2.0 TFSI quattro (Mk3)	203 D	£32,785	4/1984	227/4500	273/1600	1335kg	173	5.3	-	155	149	44.1	+ Looks, interior, decent performance and handling - Lacks ultimate involvement	****
	Audi TTS (Mk3)	202 R	£38,900	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1365kg	228	4.9	-	155	-	-	+ The most dynamically interesting TT yet - Still not as interactive as a Cayman	****
	Audi TT 2 0 TFSI (M/2)	155 R	'05-74	4/1984	208/4300	258/1600	1295kg	163	6.3	15.7	152	154	42.8	+ Front-driver loses nothing to quatro TTs - Steers like a computer game	****
	Audi TTS (Mk2)	193 R	'08-74	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1395kg	195	5.4	-	155	184	35.8	+ Usefully quicker TT; great or Netrain - Still steers like a computer game	****
	Audi TTRS (MIC2)	158 R	'09-14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1450kg	235	4.4	11.1	155	209	31.4	+ Sublime 5-cylinder turbo engine - Rest of package can't quite match it	****
	Audi TT RS Plus (Mk2)	185 D	72-74	5/2480	355/5500	343/1650	1450kg	249	4.3	-	174	209	31.4	+ Stonkingly fast cross-country - Shockingly expensive for a TT	****
	Audi TT Sport (Mkl)	081 D	'05-'06	4/1781	237/5700	236/2300	1390kg	173	5.7	-	155	-	30.3	+ Deliciously purposeful interior, crisp chassis - Numb steering	****
	Audi S5	189 D	£43,665	6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1675kg	199	4.9	-	155	190	34.9	+ Supercharged V6 makes S5 cleaner and faster - Poor body control	***
	Audi RS5 Audi R8 V8	206 R 201 R	£59,870 £93,735	8/4163 8/4163	444/8250 424/7900	317/4000 317/4500	1715kg	263 276	4.5 4.1	9.9	155 188	246 332	26.9 19.9	+ Brilliant engine and improved chassis - Lack of suspension travel; inconsistent steering	
	Audi R8 V10	181 D	£93,735 £114,835	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1560kg 1620kg	325	3.9	8.4	194	346	19.9	+ A true 911 alternative - Exclusivity comes at a price + Real supercar feel - The V8 is £20k less, and still superb	****
	Audi R8 V10 Plus	190 R	£126,835	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1570kg	351	3.8	0.4	194	346	19.0	+ An R8 fit to take on the 458 and 12C - Firm ride may be too much for some	****
o	Audi R8 LMX	206 D	£160,000	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1595kg	358	3.4	-	198	299	21.9	+ More of everything that makes the R8 great - S-tronic transmission not perfect	****
ï	Audi R8 GT	169 F	70-72	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1520kg	369	36	-	199	-	-	+ Everything we love about the R8 - Not as hardcore as we wanted	****
	Bentley Continental GT V8	178 R	£136,500	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2220kg	229	4.6	-	188	246	27.0	+ A proper drivers' Bentley with decent economy - W12 suddenly seems pointless	****
	Bentley Continental GT V8 S	204 F	£146.000	8/3933	521/6000	502/1700	2220kg	238	4.3	-	192	250	26.4	+ An even better drivers' Bentley - Vast weight makes its presence felt in harder driving	****
	Bentley Continental GT	152 D	£146,700	12/5998	567/6000	516/1700	2245kg	257	4.3	-	197	338	19.5	+ 200mph in utter comfort - Weight, thirst	****
	Bentley Continental GT Speed	205 D	£156,700	12/5998	626/6000	605/1700	2245kg	283	4.0	-	206	338	19.5	+ Desirability meets exclusivity and performance - Ageing styling	****
	Bentley Continental GT3-R	203 D	£237,500	8/3993	572/6000	518/1700	2120kg	274	3.6	-	170	295	22.2	+ The best-handling Continental ever - Expensive; it still weighs 2120kg	****
	BMW1-series M Coupe	198 R	77-72	6/2979	335/5900	369/1500	1495kg	228	4.8	-	155	224	-	+ Character, turbo pace and great looks - Came and went too quick	****
	BMW M235i Coupe	196 R	£34,260	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1455kg	224	5.0	-	155	189	34.9	+ Powertrain, chassis, looks, size - Limited-slip diff is an option, not standard	****
	BMW 435i M Sport Coupe	189 D	£41,665	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1510kg	203	5.4	-	155	169	35.8	+ Better balance than 3-series saloon - Can feel characterless at lower speeds	****
	BMW M4	206 R	£56,650	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1497kg	288	4.3		155	204	32.1	+ Ferociously fast - Only really sparkles when you're on or over the limit	****
	BMW M3 (E92) BMW M3 GTS (E92)	196 R 171 R	107-13 10-11	8/3999 8/4361	414/8300 444/8300	295/3900 324/3750	1580kg 1530kg	266 295	<b>4.3</b>	10.3	155	290 295	22.8	+ Fends of fall of its rivalsexcept the cheaper 1-series M	****
	BMW M3 (E46)	066 R	'00-07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	12.3	155	293	23.7	+ High y exclusive, one of the most focused M-cars ever - Good luck trying to find one + One of the best BMWs ever - Signify artificial steering feel	****
	BMW M3 CS (E46)	068 R	05-07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	51	12.3	155		23.7	+ CSL dynamics without CSL price - Looks "ket ne standard or	****
	BMW M3 CSL (E46)	200 R	03-07	6/3246	355/7900	273/4900	1385kg	260	5.3	12.0	155	-	6.07	+ Still superb - Changes from the automath of angle-clut in box are a bit sugnish	****
	BMW M3 (E)	148 R	93-'98	6/3201	321/7400	258/3250	1460kg	223	5.4	12.8	157	-	25.7	+ Performance, image - Never quite as good as the original	****
	BMW M3 (E30)	165 R	86-90	4/2302	212/6750	170/4600	1165kg	185	6.7	17.8	147	-	20.3	+ Best M-car ever! Race-car dynamics for the road-LHD only	****
	BMW Z4 M Coupe	097R	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1420kg	242	5.0	-	155	-	23.3	+ A real drivers' car - You've got to be prepared to get stuck in	****
	BMW M Coupe	005R	'98-'03	6/3246	325/7400	258/3250	1375 kg	240	51	-	155	-	25.0	+ Quick and characterful- Lacks finesse	****
	BMW 640d	165 D	£63,130	6/2993	309/4400	465/1500	1790kg	175	5.5	-	155	144	51.4	+ Great engine and economy, excellent build - Numb steering, unsettled B-road ride	****
	BMW M6 (Mk2)	191 D	£94,625	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1850kg	303	4.2	-	155	232	28.5	+ Mighty ability, pace, technology - You'll want the Competition Package upgrade too	****
	BMW M6 (Mk1)	106 R	'05-70	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1635kg	311	4.8	10.0	155	342	19.8	+ Awesome GT, awesome sports car - SMG gearbox now of the pace	****
	BMW i8	203 R	£99,895	3/1500	357/5800	420/3700	1485kg	244	4.4	-	155	49	134.5	+ Brilliantly executed concept; sci-fi looks - Safe dynamic set-up	****
	Chevrolet Camaro	148 R	£35,345	8/6162	426/5900	420/4600	1769kg	245	5.1	-	155	329	20.0	+ Looks like a Transformer made real - We'd prefer it in robot mode	***
Ш	Chevrolet Corvette Stingray Z51 (C7)	197 R	£61,520	8/6162	460/6000	465/4600	1539kg	304	4.4	9.4	180	279	23.5	+ Performance, chassis balance, supple ride - Body control could be better	****
•		206 R	c£88,000	8/6156	650/6400	650/3600	1598kg	413	3.2	-	186	-	-	+ Mind-boggling raw speed; surprisingly sophisticated - Edgy when really pushed	****
	Ford Mustang GT	202 R	c£34,000	8/4951	420/6500	400/4250	1678kg	254	4.4	-	155	-	-	+ Great bang per buck, but now handles too - Ride quality may not suit UK roads	****
	Ford Shelby GT500 * Ginetta G40R	178 R	c£60,000 £35,940	8/5812 4/1999	662/6500	631/4000 140/5000	1747kg 795kg	385 224	3.5	-	202 140	-	-	+ Huge performance for the money - Putting it to use takes nerve	***
	Ginetta G60	165 R 165 D	£68.000	6/3721	175/6700 310/6500	288/4500	1080kg	292	5.8	-	165			+ A race-compliant sports car for the road - Feels too soft to be a hardcore track toy + Reborn Farbio GTS boasts great engine and good looks - The ride still needs work	****
	Honda Integra Type R (DC2)	200 R	96-00	4/1797	187/8000	131/7300	1101kg	173	6.2	17.9	145	-	28.9	+ Arguably the greatest front-in-version reversion awards one	****
	Honda NSX	188 R	90-05	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1410kg	196	5.5		168	-	22.8	+ 'The useable superca' - 270bhp sounds and tweedy today	****
	Honga NSX-R*	051R	02-'03	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1270kg	221	4.4		168	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2002 - Hond a never brought it to the UK	****
	Hyundai Veloster Turbo	176 D	£22,000	4/1591	184/5500	195/1500	1313kg	142	8.2	-	133	157	40.9	+ The usual Hyundai value, with added fun - Styling might be too quirky for some	****
	Jaguar F-type Coupe	204 D	£51,250	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1557kg	216	5.1	-	161	205	32.1	+ Drop-dead looks, brilliant chassis, desirability - Engine lacks top-end fight	****
	Jaguar F-type S Coupe	202 R	£60,250	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1594kg	239	4.5	11.4	171	209	32.1	+ Exquisite style, more rewarding (and affordable) than roadster - Scrappy on the limit	***
	Jaguar F-type R Coupe	203 R	£85,000	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1650kg	334	4.2	-	186	259	25.4	+ Looks, presence, performance, soundtrack - Bumpy and boistrous	****
	Jaguar XK	130 D	£54,975	8/5000	380/6500	380/3500	1585kg	244	5.2	-	155	264	25.2	+ Fine car for the likes of us - Jag buyers may not like the harder edge	****
	Jaguar XKR	168 R	£69,975	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1678kg	305	4.6	-	155	292	23.0	+ Fast and incredibly rewarding Jag - The kids will have to stay at home	****

#### **POCKET** buying guide

Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano

Years 2006-2012 Engine V12, 5999cc Power 611bhp @ 7600rpm Torque 448lb ft @ 5600rpm 0-60mph 3.5sec Top speed 205mph



#### WHY WOULD YOU?

Because it's blisteringly quick and capable, and has a detuned Enzo engine. It's every inch the new-age Ferrari, too, with an all-aluminium chassis, magnetic dampers and a paddleshift gearbox (optional, but in 95 per cent of 599s).

#### WHAT TO PAY

£70k is the realistic entry point. £85k-95k brings the best 2008 cars within range.

#### WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

The V12 should be trouble-free if serviced meticulously. Same goes for the F1 gearbox, which needs oil changes every 37,000 miles, although every two years is better if sooner. Get a dealer to check the remaining clutch life – a replacement is £5000. Ball joints are a weak spot and replacement costs £500 per side, so listen for knocks on the test drive. (Full guide, evo 202.)









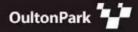














#### Coupes / GTs

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	C02 g/km	EC mpg	<b>evo</b> rating	
Jaguar XKR-S	168 R	£97,490	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1678kg	328	4.2		186	292	23.0	+ Faster and wilder than regular XKR - The F-type R Coupe	****
Jaguar XKR-S GT	193 R	74	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1638kg	336	39	-	186	292	23.0	+ The most exciting XKR ever - It's £135,000, and a very limited eartish	****
Lexus RC F	206 R	£59,995	8/4969	470/6400	391/4800	1765kg	271	4.5	-	168	-	-	+ Great steering, noise, sense of occasion - Too heavy to be truly exciting	***
Lotus Exige S (V6)	171 R	£54,500	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1176kg	298	3.8	-	170	236	-	+ Breathtaking road-racer; our joint 2012 Car of the Year-Gearshift not the sweetest	****
Lotus Exige S (S2)	105 R	'06-71	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	930kg	238	4.5	-	148	199	33.2	+ Lightweight with a hefty punch- Uninsplying soundtrack	****
Lotus Exige (S2)	068R	'04-'08	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	875 g	219	49	-	147	-	32.1	+ High y focused road and track tool - Lacks v sual impact of S1	****
Lotus Exige (S1)	200R	'00-'01	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	247	46	-	136	-	-	+ Looks and goes like Elise racer - A tad lacking in refinement	****
Lotus Evora	138 R	£52,500	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	203	5.6	13.6	162	217	30.3	+ Sublime ride and handling. Our 2009 car of the year - Pricey options	****
Lotus Evora S	168 R	£63,950	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1430kg	245	4.6	-	172	229	28.7	+ A faster and better Evora - But one which spars with the Porsche 911	****
Maserati GranTurismo	114 R	£82,280	8/4244	399/7100	339/4750	1880kg	216	5.5	12.7	177	330	19.8	+ Striking, accomplished GT - Doesn't spike the pulse like an Aston or 911	****
Maserati GranTurismo Sport	188 R	£90,810	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1880kg	245	4.8	-	185	331	19.7	+ The best everyday GranTurismo yet - Starting to get long in the tooth	****
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	193 R	£110,135	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1800kg	256	4.5	-	188	360	18.2	+ Brilliant blend of road racer and GT - Gearbox takes a little getting used to	****
Maserati Coupe	064R	'03-07 '04-07	8/4244	390/7000	333/4500	1680kg	237	48	-	177 180	-	17.6	+ Glorious engine, improved chassis - Overly sharp steering	****
Maserati GranSport	073R		8/4244	400/7000 228/8200	333/4500 156/5500	1680kg	239	4.8			200	2/6	+ Maser Coupe realises its full potential - Very Ittle	****
Mazda RX-8 Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupe	122 R 162 R	'03-'11 £58.500	2R/1308 8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1429kg 1655kg	162 277	6.5	16.4 10.3	186	299 280	24.6 23.5	+ Never mind the quirkingss, it is a great drive - Water thin torque output + Mercedes makes a proper two-door M3 rival - C63 saloon looks better	****
Mercedes-Berlz Cos Alvid Coupe  Mercedes-Berlz Cos Alvid Coupe	171 R	12-113	8/6208	510/6800	457/5200	1635kg	317	4.4	10.3	186	286	23.3		****
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG	092D	'06-'09	8/6208	481/6800	464/5000	1755kg	278	4.6	-	155	200	19.9	+ The Co3 turned up to 11 - To o heavy, not as firey as Blick Series cars of old + Power, control, build quality - Lack sultimate involvement	****
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG Black Series		07-09	8/6208	500/6800	464/5250	1750kg	289	4.0	-	186		19.9	+ AMG goes Porsche-hunt g - Laws uiting einvolvement + AMG goes Porsche-hunt g - Laws uit d gears it spoils the party	****
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG Coupe	205 D	£125,595	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1995kg	294	4.2	-	155	237	28.0	+ Thunderously fast S-class built for drivers - Lacks badge appeal of a Continental GT	****
Mercedes-AMG GT S	204 R	£110,495	8/3982	503/6250	479/1750	1570kg	326	3.8	-	193	219	30.1	+ Gorgeous to look at, fantastic chassis, huge grip - Downshifts could be quicker	****
Morean AeroMax	120 R	'08-'09	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.1		170	- 213	-	+ Well dand utter v wonderful - Only 100 were made	****
Nissan 370Z	204 R	£27,435	6/3696	323/7000	268/5200	1496kg	219	5.4	-	155	248	26.7	+ Quicker, leaner, keener than 350Z - Not quite a Cayman-killer	****
Nissan 370Z Nismo (2014MY)	204 D	£37,575	6/3696	339/7400	274/5200	1535kg	224	5.2	-	155	248	26.6	+ Sharper looks, improved ride, extra thrills - Engine lacks sparkle, still expensive	***
Nissan 350Z	107R	03-09	6/3498	309/6800	264/4800	1532kg	205	5.5	13.0	155	-	24.1	+ Huge fun, and great value too - Honestly, we're struck ing	***
Nissan GT-R (2012MY/2013MY/2014MY)	200 R	£78,020	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	3.2	7.5	196	275	24.0	+ GT-R is quicker and better than ever - But costs over £20K more than its launch price	****
Nissan GT-R Nismo	199 R	£125,000	6/3799	592/6800	481/3200	1720kg	350	2.6	-	196	275	24.0	+ Manages to make regular GT-R feel imprecise - Compromised by super-firm suspension	
Nissan GT-R (2010MY)	152 R	70-72	6/3799	523/6400	451/3200	1740kg	305	30	-	194	279	23.5	+ More powerful version of the original - But they're not worlds apart to drive	****
Nissan GT-R (2008MY)	125R	'08-10	6/3799	473/6400	434/3200	1740kg	276	3.8	-	193	-	-	+ Our 2008 Car of the Year, now from Just £35K - You won't see 20 mg often	****
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	196R	'99-02	6/2568	276/7000	289/4400	1560kg	180	4.7	12.5	165	-	20.1	+ Big, brutal, and great fun - Needs more than the standard 276bhp	****
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R33)	196R	'97-'99	6/2568	276/6800	271/4400	1540kg	182	5,4	14.3	155	-	22.0	+ Proof that Japanese hi-tech can work (superbly) - Limited supply	****
Noble M12 GTO-3R	200 R	'03-'06	6/2968	352/6200	350/3500	1080kg	332	3.8	-	170	-	-	+ The ability to humb e exotica - Notchy gearchange can spoll the flow	****
Peugeot RCZ 1.6 THP 200	155 R	£26,900	4/1598	197/5500	202/1700	1421kg	141	7.3	18.1	147	155	42.1	+ Distinctive looks, highly capable handling - Could be a bit more exciting	****
Peugeot RCZ R	204 R	£32,000	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1280kg	211	5.9	-	155	145	44.8	+ Rewarding and highly effective when fully lit - Dated cabin, steering lacks feel	****
Porsche Cayman (981)	185 F	£39,694	6/2706	271/7400	214/4500	1310kg	210	5.7	-	165	192	34.4	+ Very enticing for the money in basic spec - You might still want the power of the 'S'	****
Porsche Cayman S (981)	202 R	£48,783	6/3436	321/7400	273/4500	1320kg	247	4.5	10.5	175	206	32.1	+ The Cayman comes of age - Erm	****
Porsche Cayman GTS (981)	203 R	£55,397	6/3436	335/7400	280/4750	1345kg	253	4.9	-	177	211	31.4	+ Tweaks improve an already sublime package - Slightly 'aftermarket' looks	****
Porsche Cayman (987)	131 R	71-73	6/2893	261/7200	221/4400	1330kg	199	5.8	-	165	221	30.1	+ Extra power, Just as involving - Still lacks the desirability of other Porsches	****
Porsche Cayman S (987)	132 R	'06-13	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	237	5.2	-	172	223	29.7	+ Still want that 911? - Yeah, us too	****
Porsche Cayman R (987)	158 R	71-13	6/3436	325/7400	273/4750	1295kg	255	4.7	-	175	228	29.1	+ Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes	****
Porsche 911 Carrera (991)	199 R	£73,509	6/3436	345/7400	288/5600	1380kg	254	4.7	-	179	212	31.4	+ 911 becomes cleaner and cleverer - But some of its character's gone AWOL	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991)	201 R	£83,545	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1395kg	287	4.3	9.5	188	224	29.7	+ As above, but with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility	****
Porsche 911 Carrera 4 (991)	177 D	£78,365	6/3436	345/7400	288/5600	1430kg	245	4.5	-	177	219	30.4	+ A touch more engaging than 2wd 991 - Still stand-offish compared to 997	****
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (991)	179 R	£88,400	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1445kg	277	4.5	-	185	234	28.5	+ The best 991-generation Carrera - Choose your spec carefully	****
Porsche 911 Carrera GTS (991)	204 R	£91,098 '08-11	6/3800 6/3800	424/7500 380/6500	324/5750 310/4400	1425kg	302	4.4	-	190 188	223	29.7	+ More fun than other RWD 991 Carreras - Optional active anti-roll bars rob feedback	****
Porsche 911 Camera S (9972)	070 R	'04-'08	6/3824	350/6600	295/4600	1425kg 1420kg	271			182	292	24.5	+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels at Chinical	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.1)	008 R	98-01		296/6800	258/4600		246	4.6 5.2	10.9	174	-	28.0	+ evo Car of the Year 2004; ke a junior GT3 - Tech over load?	****
Porsche 91 Carrera (996 3 4) Porsche 91 Carrera (993)	UU8 K	98-01	6/3387	285/6100	251/5250	1320kg	228	5.2	-	168	-		+ evo Car of the Year 1996; beautifully polished - Some like a bit of rough	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (991)	206 R	£100.540	6/3600 6/3799	468/8250	324/6250	137 kg 1430kg	333	3.5	-	196	289	25.0 23.0	+ More character than 9.6 - Harder work at speed + evo Car of the Year 2013 - At its best at licence-troubling speeds	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (991)	182 R	'09-71	6/3797	429/7600	317/6250	1395kg	312	4.2	9.2	194	303	22.1	+ Even better than the Car it replaced - Give us a minute	****
Porsche 9/1GT3 RS (3.8, 997.2)	200 R	10-11	6/3797	444/7900	317/6750	1395кg 1370кg	329	4.0	9.2	194	314	66.1	+ Our favourite car from the first 200 sues of evo - For people, ke us, nothing	****
Porsche 9/1GT3RS 4 0 (9972)	187R	71-72	6/3996	493/8250	339/5750	1360kg	368	3.8		193	326		+ evo Car of the Year 2011 - Unforgiving on to add to ; crazy used to les	****
Po scre 91GT3 (9971)	182 R	07-09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1395kg	298	4.3	9.4	193	360	-	+ Runner up vo Car of the Year 2006 - Ferra is 9 GTBs	****
Porsche 9/1GT3 RS (9971)	105 R	07-09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1375 kg	302	4.2	2.4	193		-	+ No Car of the Year 2007 - A chunk more money than the brilliant GT3	****
Po scre 21 GT3 (996.2)	082R	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1380kg	272	4.3	9.2	190	-	-	+ o Car of the Year 2003 - Chars is a 1 th o track-focused for some rolls	****
Po sche 91 GT3 RS (996.2)	068R	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1330kg	286	4.2	9.2	190	-	-	+ Track-biased version of above - I mited supply	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.1)	182 R	99	6/3600	360/7200	273/5000	1350kg	271	4.5	10.3	187	-	21.9	+ evo Car of the Year 1999 - Poische didn't build enough	****
Rolls-Royce Wraith	205 D	£229.128	12/6592	624/5600	590/1500	2360kg	260	4.6	1013	155	327	20.2	+ Refinement, chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down	****
Subaru BR7	203 B	£22,495	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1230kg	163	7.6	-	140	181	36.2	+ Fine chassis, great steering - Weak engine, not the slide-happy car they promised	****
Toyota GT86	174 R	£22,995	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1275kg	157	7.6	-	140	181	36.2	+ More fun than its cousin (above) - Same lack of torque, poor interior quality	***
TVR Sagaris	097R	'05-'07	6/3996	406/7500	349/5000	1078kg	383	3.7	-	185	-	-	+ Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch out mistic	****
TVR Tuscan S (M/2)	076 R	'05-'07	6/3996	400/7000	315/5250	1100kg	369	4.0	-	185	-	-	+ Poss by TVP's best ever car - Aerodynamic enhancements'	***
TVR Cerbera Speed Sx	004R	98-'04	6/3996	350/6800	330/5000	1130kg	315	5.0	11.4	160+	-	-	+ Accomplished and destrable - Check chassis for comosion	***
VW Scirocco GT 2.0 TSI	155 R	£25,845	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1369kg	158	6.5	-	153	139	47.1	+ Golf GTI price and performance - Interior lacks flair	****
VW Scirocco R	200 D	£32,295	4/1984	276/6000	258/2500	1426kg	187	5.7	-	155	187	35.3	+ Great engine, grown-up dynamics - Perhaps a little too grown-up for some	****



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★ Thrill-free zone ★★ Tepid ★★★ Interesting ★★★★ Seriously good ★★★★★ A truly great car



Our Choice Ferrari 458 Speciale. The regular 458 Italia is amazing enough, but the Speciale follows in the tradition of the 360 Challenge Stradale and 430 Scuderia and makes the car it is based on even more, well, special. Our 2014 Car of the Year. It's equally brilliant in open-top 'Speciale A' form, too.



Porsche's 918 Spyder (left) pips the McLaren P1 on the road, and vice versa on the track. The LaFerrari is an incredible drive, too. If you can stretch to it, maybe get all three.... Meanwhile, Pagani's Huayra was our joint 2012 Car of the Year and Lamborghini's Aventador offers true supercar drama.

#### Supercars

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft./rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	<b>eVo</b> rating	
9ff GT9R	127 D	c£450,000	6/4000	1120/7850	774/5970	1346kg	845	2.9	-	260	-	-	+ Above 100mph eats Veyrons for breakfast - Eats M3 dust at traffic lights	****
Aston Martin Vanquish (Mk2)	203 R	£192,995	12/5935	568/6650	465/5500	1739kg	332	3.6		201	298	22.1	+ Much better than the DBS it succeeds, especially in 2015MY form - It's no Ferrari F12	****
Aston Martin Vanguish S (Md) Aston Martin One-77	110 R	'05-'07 '10-'12	12/5935 12/7312	520/7000 750/6000	425/5800 553/7600	1875kg 1740kg	202 438	<b>4.9</b>	10.1	200 220+	-	-	+ Vangush ons supercar greats - A tad in minating at the limit + The engine, the looks, the drama - Gearbox hat is manoeuvring; only 77 were made	****
Bugatti Veyron Super Sport	151 R	c£2.0m	16/7993	1183/6400	1106/3000	1838kg	654	2.5	-	268	539	12.2	+ The world's fastest supercar - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals	****
Bugatti Veyron Grand Sport Vitesse	185 R	c£1.7m	16/7993	1183/6400	1106/3000	1990kg	604	2.6	-	254	539	12.2	+ The world's fastest convertible - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals	****
Bugatti Veyron 16.4	134 R	'05-71	16/7993	1000/6000	922/2200	1950kg	521	2.8	5.8	253	596	77.4	+ Super bly engineered 4WD quad-turbo rocket - Er, lacks luggage space?	****
Bugatti EB110	078 R	91-95	12/3500	552/8000	451/3750	1566kg	358	3.4	-	212	-	-	+ Super bly engineered 4WD quad-turbo rocket - It just fizzled out	****
Caparo T1 Chevrolet Corvette 2R1	138 R	£301,975	8/3499 8/6162	575/10,500 638/6500	310/9000 603/3800	689kg 1528kg	848	3.8	6.2 7.6	205	355	18.8	+ Absolutely staggering performance - Absolutely staggering price tag + have pace and character - Take plenty of brave pills if there is rain	****
Ferrari 458 Italia	183 R	£178.551	8/4497	562/9000	398/6000	1485kg	384	3.2	6.8	202	307	20.6	+ An astounding achievement, looks fantastic - There'll never be a manual	****
Ferrari 458 Spider	185 R	£198,996	8/4497	562/9000	398/6000	1530kg	373	3.3	-	198	275	23.9	+ A 458 that sounds and feels more organic - Er, 4mph slower than the Italia?	****
Ferrari 458 Speciale	203 R	£208,090	8/4497	597/9000	398/6000	1395kg	435	3.0	-	202+	275	23.9	+ evo Car of the Year 2014 - If you don't own a regular 458, nothing	****
Ferrari 458 Speciale A	204 D	£228,682	8/4497	597/9000	398/6000	1445kg	420	3.0	-	199	275	21.2	+ Same dynamics as the coupe but less shouty - Some chassis flex on bumpy surfaces	****
Ferrari F430 Ferrari 430 Scuderla	163 R 121 R	04-10	8/4308 8/4308	483/8500 503/8500	343/5250 347/5250	1449kg 1350kg	339 378	4.0 3.5	7.7	196 198	-	18.6 15.7	+ Just brilliant - Dian't you read the plus point? + Successful F1 technology transplant - Likes to shout about it	****
Ferrari Scuderia Spider 16M	133 D	'09	8/4308	503/8500	347/5250	1440kg	355	3.7	1.7	196	360	18.0	+ A hardcore soft op Ferra i - Earplugs recommended	****
Ferrari 360 Modena	163 R	'99-'04	8/3586	394/8500	275/4750	1390kg	288	4.5	9.0	183	-	17.0	+ Worthy successor to 355 - Not quite as involving as it should be	****
Ferrari 360 Challerge Stradale	068R	'03-'04	8/3586	420/8500	275/4750	1280kg	333	4.1	-	186	-	-	+ Totally exhila at ingroad-racer. It's loud- it's very, very loud	****
Ferrari F355 F1 Berlinetta	163 R	'97-'99	8/3496	374/8250	268/6000	1350kg	291	4.7	-	183	-	16.7	+ Looks terrific, sounds even better - Are you kidding?	****
Ferrari F12 Berlinetta Ferrari 599 GTB Forano	190 R	£240,083	12/6262	730/8250 61/7600	509/6000 448/5600	1630kg 1688kg	455 368	3.1 3.5	7/	211	350 415		+730bhp or t too much power for the road - Super-quick steering is an acquired taste	****
Ferrari 599 GTO	161 R	71-12	12/5999	661/8250	457/6500	1605kg	418	3.4	7.4	208	410	13.0	+ evo Car of the Year 2006 - Banks are getting harder to ob + One of the truly great femalis - Erm, the air continit very good	****
Ferrari 575M Florano Handling Pack	200R	02-'06	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1730kg	298	4.2	9.6	202	-	12.3	+ For no pack makes 75 truly great - It should have been standard	****
Ferrari 550 Maranello	169 R	97-102	12/5474	485/7000	415/5000	1716kg	287	43	10.0	199	-	12.3	+ Everything - Nothing	****
Ferrari FF	194 R	£227,168	12/6262	651/8000	504/6000	1880kg	347	3.7	-	208	360	15.4	+ Four seats and 4WD, but a proper Ferrari - Looks divide opinion	****
Ferrari 612 Scaglietti F1	090 R	'04-11	12/5748	533/7250	434/5250	1840kg	294	4.3	9.8	199	470	13.8	+ Awes amoly capable grand tourer - See above	****
Ferrari LaFerrari	203 R	c£1m	12/6262	950/9000	664/6750	1255kg	769	3.0		217+	330	-	+ Perhaps the greatest Ferrari ever - Brakes lack a touch of precision on track	****
Ferrari Enzo Ferrari E50	203 R 186 R	02-'04 '96-'97	12/5999 12/4699	651/7800 513/8500	485/5500 347/6500	1365kg 1230kg	485	<b>3.5</b>	6.7	217+	545	-	+ Intoxicating, exploitable - Cabin detailing fails short of a Zonda or F1's + A better drivers' Ferrari than the 288, F40 or Enzo - Not better downs, though	****
Ferrari F40	199 R	87-92	8/2936	471/7000	425/4000	1100kg	437	41	-	201	-		+ Br a lyfast - t's in the dictionary under turbo lag'	****
Ferrari 288 GTO	064R	'84-'95	8/2855	394/7000	366/3900	1160kg	345	4.9	-	189	-	-	+ Painfully beautiful, raier than the F40 - You are joking?	****
Ford GT	200R	'04-'06	8/5409	550/6500	500/3750	1583kg	353	37	-	205	-	-	+ Our 2005 Car of the Year - Don't scalp yourself getting in	****
Gumpert Apollo	110 R	£275,000	8/4163	690/6300	675/4000	1200kg	584	3.0	-	220+	-	-	+ Stupendous perfomance, 'Apollo' - High price, 'Gumpert'	****
Hennessey Venom GT	180 R	£900,000	8/7000	1244/6500	1155/4000	1244kg	1016	2.5	-	270	-	-	+ 0-200mph in 14.5sec, and it handles too - Looks like an Exige	****
Jaguar XJ 70 Koenigsegg Agera R	180 R	c£1.09m	6/3498 8/5032	542/7200 1124/7100	475/4500 885/2700	1470kg 1435kg	<i>375</i> 796	2.8	-	213 273	-	-	+ 6 stain's greatest supercaun il McLa en built the F1 + As fast and exciting as your body can handle - It's Veyron money	****
Koenigsegg One:1	202 R	c£2.0m	8/5065	1341/7500	1011/6000	1360kg	1002	2.9	-	273	-	-	+ The most powerful car we've ever tested - It's sold out; we couldn't afford one anyway	
Koenigsegg CCX	094R	'05-10	9/4700	806/6900	678/5700	1180kg	694	3.9	7.7	245+	-	-	+ Sweden's greatest supercar - Sweden's only supercar	****
Koenigsegg CCXR Edition	118 R	'08-'10	8/4800	1004/7000	796/5600	1280kg	797	28	-	250+	-	-	+ One of the world's fastest cars - Spikey power delivery	****
Lamborghini Huracán LP610-4	201 R	£180,720	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1532kg	399	3.2	-	202+	290	22.6	+ Rare depth of character and ability - Takes work to find its sweet-spot	****
Lamborghini all ardo LP560 4	180 D 152 R	'08-13 10-13	10/5204	552/8000 562/8000	398/6500 398/6500	1410kg	398	3.7 3.5	-	202	325 325	16.0	+ Still a missile from A to B - Starting to show its age	****
Lamborghini LP570 4 Superleggera Lamborghini Gallardo	094R	06-08	10/3204	513/8000	375/4250	1340kg 1520kg	426 343	4.3	9.4	196	323	20.0	+ Less weight and more power than original Superleggera - LP560 - 4 runs it very close + On a full-burest - tit spins all four wheels. Cool - Signily clurky e-gear	****
Lamborghini Gallardo Superleggera	104R	'07-'08	10/4961	522/8000	376/4250	1420kg	373	3.8	2.7	196	-	-	+ Lighter, more agree - Grabby carbon brakes, clurky e-gear	****
Lamborghini Aventador LP700-4	194 R	£260,040	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1575kg	445	2.9	-	217	370	17.7	+ Most important new Lambo since the Countach - Erm expensive?	****
Lamborghini Aventador Roadster	184 R	£288,840	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1625kg	431	3.0	-	217	370	17.7	+ Sensational engine and styling - A wee bit on the thirsty side	****
Lamborghini Murdelago	089D	01-06	12/6/92	570/7500	479/5400	1650kg	351 385	4.0	-	205 211	-	- 21.2	+ Gorge us, capable and incredibly friendly - V12 feels stressed	****
Lamborghini Murdeano LP64 0 Lamborghini Murdeano LP670 - 4 SV	093 R 200 R	'06-71 '09-71	12/6496 12/6496	631/8000 661/8000	487/6000 487/6500	1665kg 1565kg	429	33 3.2	7.3	212	-	21.3	+ Compe   g old-school supercar - You d better be on your toes + A supercar in   s true   wildest sense - Be prepared   r stares	****
Lamborghini Diablo 0	019 R	'00-'02	12/5992	550/7100	457/5500	1625kg	343	3.8		200+	-	-	+ Best-built, best-looking Diablo of all-People's perceptions	****
Lexus LFA/LFA Nürburgring	200 R	70-72	10/4805	552/8700	354/6800	1480kg	379	3.7	-	202	-	-	+ Absurd and compelling supercar - Baose and price don't guite match	****
Maserati MC12	079 R	'04-'05	12/5998	621/7500	481/5500	1445kg	437	3.8	-	205	-	-	+ Rarer than an Enzo - The Ferrar's better	****
McLaren 650S	196 R	£195,250	8/3799	641/7250	500/6000	1428kg	456	3.0	-	207	275	24.2	+ Better brakes, balance and looks than 12C; more power too - Costs an extra £19k	****
McLaren P1	197R 205 R	77-74 £866.000	8/3799 8/3799	616/7500 903/7500	442/3000 664/4000	1434kg 1395kg	4 <i>35</i> 658	2.8		207	279 194	24.2 34.0	+ Staggering performance, refinement - Engine noise can be grating	****
McLaren F1	205 R	94-98	12/6064	627/7500	479/4000	1393kg	560	12	63	240+	194	19.0	+ Freakish breadth of ability - At its mind-bending best on track + Sill the most single-minded supercar ever - There I never be another	****
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AVG Black Series	131 R	'09-10	12/5980	661/5400	737/2200	1876kg	358	4.0	8.1	199	-	-	+ Bonkers looks, bonkers speed - Bonkers £25 K price	****
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	159 R	£165,030	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1620kg	335	4.1	8.4	197	308	21.4	+ Great engine and chassis (gullwing doors too!) - Slightly tardy gearbox	****
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Black Series	204 R	£229,985	8/6208	622/7400	468/5500	1550kg	408	3.6	-	196	321	20.6	+ Stunning engine, superb body control - Be careful on less-than-smooth roads	****
Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren	073R	'04-'07	8/5439	617/6500	575/3250	1693kg	370	3.7	-	208	-	-	+ Zonda-pace, 575-style drivability - Dreadful brake feel	****
Noble M600	186 R	c£200,000	8/4439	650/6800	604/3800	1198kg	551	3.8	7.7	225	-	-	+ Spiritual successor to the Ferrari F40 - It's a bit pricey + Our joint 2012 Car of the Year - Engine isn't as nape-prickling as the Zonda's	****
Pagani Huayra Pagani Zonda 760RS	185 R 170 R	c£1m £1.5m	12/5980 12/7291	720/5800 750/6300	737/2250 575/4500	1350kg 1210kg	542 630	3.3	-	224 217+	-	-	+ One of the most extreme Zondas ever - One of the last Zondas ever (probably)	****
Pagani Zonda S 7 3	096 R	702-705	12/7291	555/5900	553/4050	1250kg	451	36	-	197	-	-	+ ev o Car of the Year 2001 (in earlier 7.0 form) - Values have gone up a fair bit since then	****
Pagani Zonda F	186 R	'05-'06	12/7291	602/6150	575/4000	1230kg	497	36	-	214	-	-	+ Everything an Italian supercar ought to be - Looks a Dit blingy next to a Carrera GT	****
Pagani Zonda Cinque Roadster	147D	'09-10	12/7291	669/6200	575/4000	1400kg	485	34	-	217+	-	-	+ The best Zonda ever - Doesn't come up in the classifieds often	****
Porsche 911 Turbo (991)	194 R	£120,598	6/3800	513/6000	524/2100	1595kg	327	3.4	-	195	227	29.1	+ Incredible pace, whatever the weather - More involvement would't go amiss	****
Porsche 911 Turbo S (991)	188 R	£142,120	6/3800	552/6500	553/2200	1605kg	349	3.1	-	197	227	29.1	+ Still unrivalled as an everyday supercar - At times disguises the thrills it can offer + The Turno at the very top of its name - The GT3's cheaper	****
Porsche 91 Turbo (9972) Porsche 91 GT2 RS (9972)	140 R 204 R	'09-13 10-13	6/3800 6/3600	493/6000 611/6500	479/1950 516/250	1570kg 1370kg	319 453	3.2 35	7,3	193 205	272 284	24.4	+ The Turbo at the very top of its game - The GT3's Cheaper  + More powerful than a Carrera GT. Handles, too - Erm	****
Porsone 911 Turbo (9971)	094R	'06-09	6/3600	472/6000	457/1950	1585kg	303	4.0	8.7	193	284		+ Monst er corner ng abi ly - A - t wo ly on a standard settings	****
Porsche 911 Turbo (996)	017R	'00-'06	6/3600	414/6000	413/2700	1540kg	273	4.1	10.0	189	-		+ evo Car of the year 2000; the 911 for all seasons - We can't find any reasons	****
Porsche 9/1 GT2 (996)	072R	'04-'06	6/3600	475/5700	457/3500	1420kg	339	4.0	-	198	-		+ Later revisions made it even more of a star - Care still regulied	****
Porsche 911 Turbo (993)	066 R	'95-'98	6/3600	408/5750	398/4500	1502kg	276	37	-	180	-	19.4	+ Stupendous all-weather supercar - It doesn't rain enough	****
Porsche 911 GT2 (993)	003R	96-99	6/3600	430/5700	398/4500	1290kg	339	39	-	184	- 70	-	+ Halry-arsed homologation special - Only 57 were made	****
	200 R	£781,155	8/4593	875/8500	944/6600 435/5750	1674kg 1380kg	531 445	2.6 <b>3.8</b>	7.6	211 205	79	85.6	+ Blistering performance; cohesive hybrid tech - Added weight and complexity + Sill feels are d of 1st ime - New 1st modern tyres to tame 1st pointings	****
Porsche 918 Spyder	2000	07.706	10/5700				99.7	3.0	1.0	233.7	-	_		****
Porsche Carrera GT	200 R	'04-'06 '87-'90	10/5733 6/2850	604/8000							-	-		
	200 R 192 R 097 R	'04-'06 87-'90 c£155,000	10/5733 6/2850 6/3746	604/8000 444/6500 641/7000	369/5000 641/3500	1450kg 1530kg	<i>311</i> 426	3.7	-	197 219	-	-	+ Tech shows of the Thee Sindern yes to tain as a mess + Tech shows se, still a grant of the - United choice of colours? + Beautifully executed car with truly immense power - Needs care	****
Por sche Carrera GT Por sche 959	192 R	87-'90	6/2850	444/6500	369/5000	1450kg	371	3.7	-	197			+ Tech showcase, still a great drive - Limited choice of colours?	****

#### Track Times



Car Radical SR8LM (fastest car)	Lap time 1:13.6	Peak mph 127.8	issue no. 138	Condition Dry
Caparo T1 (fastest supercar)	1:14.8	130.9	131	Dry
Ferrari 458 Italia	1:19.3	120.0	159	Dry
Gumpert Apollo S	1:19.4	120.4	119	Dry
McLaren MP4-12C (Corsa tyres)	1:19.6	121.2	159	Dry
Caterham Levante V8	1:19.6	118.6	131	Dry
Porsche 997 GT2 RS	1:19.9	122.3	158	Dry
Lotus 2-Eleven GT4	1:20.1	113.2	138	Dry
Caterham Superlight R500	1:20.2	115.7	119	Dry
McLaren MP4-12C	1:20.6	120.9	159	Dry
Noble M600	1:20.8	121.8	159	Dry
Porsche 997 GT3 RS 4.0 (fastest coupe)	1:21.0	118.2	160	Dry
Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	1:21.3	121.1	134	Dry
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	1:21.5	113.6	119	Dry
(TM X-Bow (300bhp)	1:21.5	112.7	138	Dry
Ferrari 430 Scuderia	1:21.7	117.2	121	Dry
Porsche 997.2 GT3 RS (3.8)	1:21.9	116.8	150	Dry
amborghini Gallardo LP560-4	1:22.5	119.1	122	Dry
Brooke Double R	1:22.5	113.2	119	Dry
amborghini Murciélago LP640	1:22.9	116.7	143	Dry
Porsche Carrera GT	1:23.3	115.2	119	Dry
Porsche 997.2 GT3	1:23.3	114.5	138	Dry
Porsche 997 Turbo S	1:23.5	117.5	146	Dry
Porsche 997 GT2	1:23.5	115.1	119	
Vissan GT-R (2008MY)	1:23.6	113.1	119	Dry
	1:23.6	112.5		Dry
Porsche 991 Carrera Cabrielet			182	Dry
Porsche 991 Carrera Cabriolet Mercedes-Benz SI 63 AMG	1:23.9	112.3	183 VouTubo	Dry
		110.5	YouTube	Dry
Porsche 997 Turbo	1:24.1	113.5	136	Damp
otus 340R (190bhp)	1:24.2	110.0	135	Dry
Porsche Boxster S (981)	1:24.2	109.3	183	Dry
Caterham Superlight R300	1:24.3	101.5	138	Dry
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	1:24.5	115.1	160	Dry
Porsche Cayman S (981)	1:24.5	109.2	202	Dry
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	1:24.6	115.7	146	Dry
Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)	1:24.7	107.7	167	Dry
Caterham 7 Supersport	1:24.8	101.6	YouTube	Dry
errari California	1:25.0	111.8	134	Dry
(TM X-Bow	1:25.0	105.0	123	Dry
BMW E92 M3 Coupe	1:25.1	109.1	162	Dry
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG Black	1:25.2	108.6	131	Dry
laguar F-type V8 S	1:25.2	111.2	183	Dry
Audi RS5	1:25.4	108.8	162	Dry
Audi R8 Spyder V8	1:25.5	107.0	167	Dry
Porsche Cayman R	1:25.5	106.8	158	Dry
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	1:25.6	109.1	183	Dry
BMW M5 (F10) (fastest saloon)	1:25.7	112.0	165	Dry
laguar XKR-S	1:25.7	-	YouTube	Dry
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	1:25.8	110.9	146	Dry
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400	1:25.9	107.5	138	Dry
BMW 1-series M Coupe	1:25.9		158	
Mitsubishi Evo X RS 360		106.4		Dry
	1:26.1	106.6	153	Dry
Renaultsport Mégane 265 Trophy (fastest hot hatch)	1:26.1	105.3	166	Dry
aguar F-type S Coupe	1:26.2	106.3	202	Dry
Audi TT RS	1:26.3	107.2	149	Dry
Aston Martin DBS	1:26.4	109.5	143	Dry
Porsche Panamera Turbo	1:26.5	109.2	137	Dry
Audi RS6 Avant (C7) (fastest estate)	1:26.5	-	YouTube	Dry
RMW M135i	1:26.6	-	YouTube	Dry
aguar XJ220	1:26.7	111.7	131	Dry
Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (fastest 4x4)	1:26.8	106.1	YouTube	Dry
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	1:26.8	104.9	165	Dry
Porsche Cayenne Turbo	1:26.9	107.4	158	Dry
Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG	1:26.9	-	205	Dry
otus Evora	1:27.1	104.2	145	Dry
Vissan 370Z	1:27.1	104.0	158	Dry
aguar F-type V6 S	1:27.2	105.0	YouTube	Dry
Porsche Panamera S	1:27.3	102.4	165	Dry
Renaultsport Mégane 265 Cup	1:27.3	-	YouTube	Dry
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupe	1:27.7	111.0	162	Dry
otus Elise SC	1:27.7	104.6	131	Dry
Audi S3	1:27.7	104.0	YouTube	Dry
/auxhall VXR8 Bathurst S BMW E46 M3 CSL	1:27.8	106.1	131	Dry
	1:27.8	105.4	153	Dry
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	1:27.8	103.3	121	- D
Audi RS6 Avant (C6) (fastest estate)	1:27.9	111.0	121	Dry
aguar XFR	1:27.9	108.1	137	Dry
SEAT Leon Cupra 280	1:28.0		YouTube	Dry
exus IS-F	1:28.1	106.4	151	Dry
Porsche Boxster S (987)	1:28.1	105.4	120	Dry
Subaru WRX STI	1:28.3	101.6	157	Dry
	1:28.3	-	205	Dry
		102.4	162	Dry
Porsche Macan S		102.4		
Porsche Macan S EAT Leon Cupra R	1:28.7			
Porsche Macan S SEAT Leon Cupra R Bentley Continental Supersports	1:28.7 1:29.2	105.8	149	Dry
Porsche Macan S EAT Leon Cupra R Bentley Continental Supersports otus Elise Club Racer	1:28.7 1:29.2 1:29.2	105.8 95.5	149 162	Dry Dry
Porsche Macan S SEAT Leon Cupra R Bentley Continental Supersports Jotus Elise Club Racer Renaultsport Mégane 250 Cup Jauxhall VXR8 Clubsport Tourer	1:28.7 1:29.2	105.8	149	Dry



#### **West Circuit facts**

**■ Location** Bedford Autodrome

☐ Opened 1999 ☐ Left turns 9 ☐ Length 1.85 miles (2.98 kilometres) ☐ Right turns 6

- **Direction** Anti-clockwise







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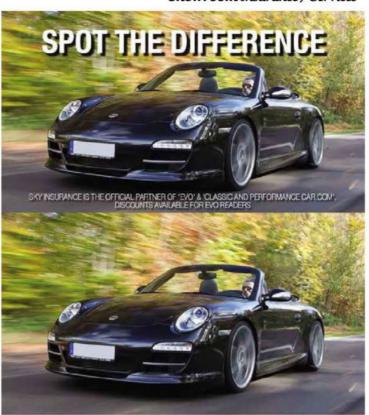
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# **Art** of speed



#### **Peugeot 106 Rallye** steel wheels

by DAVID VIVIAN | PHOTOGRAPHY by CHRIS RUTTER

WHEN I WAS A BOY, THERE WERE NUMEROUS imaginary ways to make your dad's car perform better that nevertheless seemed perfectly real (but then, so did Father Christmas and the Tooth Fairy). One, of course, was to apply stripes to the bodywork. Not for nothing were they called 'go faster'. Another was to have a sheet of vinyl fabric glued to the roof. Truly mysterious. The daddy of them all, however – the one that added 10mph to the top speed at the very least - was to remove the hubcaps, thus exposing the sexy contours of the steel wheels and their grimy fixing nuts to the fast flowing air and the gaze of amazed onlookers, a few doubtless mouthing 'some kind of

Who knows, maybe it worked. Hubcaps could be hefty things back then, and the alloy wheel as a fashion statement with benefits was still a long way off. Interestingly, de-capped wheels looked faster on some cars than others, my father's Hillman Minx belonging firmly in the 'others' group. A Mini Cooper could carry it off, though.

Done right, there was something ineffably tough, essential and functional about going 'au naturel' that spoke of saving weight, of discarding the unnecessary, of keeping your competition licence behind the sun visor. But it was a fine line, and could just as easily raise howls of derisive laughter.

Thanks to one car, though, bare steel wheels (especially ones that are painted white) will be remembered as being forever cool. The Peugeot 106 Rallye started life in 1994 as a stripped-out 106 GTi with neo-rally leanings, a screaming 1.3-litre motor, cheap go-faster stripes (natch) and, best of all, naked, lightweight Michelin Sport steel wheels. Painted white. They were the perfect paring down statement; not just any old steel wheels, but light, white ones. The self-imposed poverty spec also included no power assistance for the steering, no electric windows and no ABS.

Against the clock the Rallye wasn't fast, taking 10.6sec to reach 60mph from rest. But 100bhp and 7200rpm had seldom seemed quite so frenetic, and on a twisty road, thanks to its meagre 800kg mass and some well-judged suspension tweaks, it was mustard, and not the French kind. For the Series 2 car in 1997, a brawnier 1.6-litre engine was pressed into service and the steel wheels grew by half an inch in width to become 6 x 14in, and were therefore able to accommodate fatter tyres. Opinions were split on whether this was a good thing, both from an aesthetic and dynamic perspective, some preferring the broader stance and extra grip on offer, others lamenting the loss of 'purity' and playfulness. No two ways about it, though, steelies have never looked better.

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#### Solutions Personal Contract Plan\* representative example for the SEAT Leon 5dr SE 1.2 TSI 110PS based on a 10,000-mile agreement.

Duration:	36 months	Full deposit:	£4,791.66	Acceptance fee2:	£125.00	Option to purchase fee <sup>3</sup>	£60.00	Excess mileage charge (per	mile)4: 4.4p
35 monthly payments of	: £185.00	SEAT UK Deposit contrib	oution1: £1,000.00	Total payable by customer:	£17,936.76	Total amount payable:	£18,936.76	Representative APR:	5.80%
Customer deposit:	£3,791.66	Retail cash price:	£17,235.00	Optional final payment:	£7,485.10	Amount of credit:	£12,443.34	Rate of interest:	5.17%

<sup>\*</sup>At the end of the agreement there are three options: i) retain the vehicle: pay the optional final payment to own the vehicle; ii) return the vehicle; or iii) replace: part exchange the vehicle, subject to status.

Official fuel consumption for the SEAT Leon in mpg (litres per 100km); urban 32.5 (8.7) - 72.4 (3.9); extra-urban 49.6 (5.7) - 91.1 (3.1); combined 42.8 (6.6) - 85.6 (3.3). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 154 - 87 g/km.



<sup>\*</sup>Available when purchased on Solutions Personal Contract Plan. 'Available on SE and FR models only. £1,930 RRP refers to optional specification if priced individually. 'Deposit contribution is available when purchased on Solutions. Retail Sales only. \*Up to 3 years/10,000 miles per annum (whichever comes first) when purchased with Solutions. 'Payable with first payment. 'Payable with optional final payment. 'Subject to agreed annual mileage. Retail Sales only. Offer available for vehicles ordered by 31st March 2015 and delivered by 30th June 2015 from participating Dealers. Further charges may be payable if vehicle is returned. Offers are not available in conjunction with any other offer and may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Available to 18s and over. Subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply. Finance subject to status. Accurate at time of publication. Freepost SEAT Finance.